

Chronicles

December 1994

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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the
Faith
•
Life
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Post-
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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



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On Secession

It appears that the reality of the situation has escaped Samuel Francis in his "Secessionist Fantasies" (Principalities & Powers, August 1994), in which he argues that "secession . . . is for losers." That, indeed, may be true, but it should be pointed out that the secession he was talking about is a withdrawal from a unified whole, as in the case of the Southern states withdrawing from the Union, whereas the current term "secession" (used for lack of a more convenient one) addresses the dissolution of a mélange of incompatible parts, as happened in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The United States (an ironic name), in a process accelerated by the massive influx of deliberately unassimilative immigrants in combination with a pervasive media and educational policy of multiculturalism, is rapidly approaching the critical dissociative condition of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Maintaining a geopolitical cohesiveness ("secession") in the face of such a disintegrating hodgepodge is not an effort undertaken nor an accomplishment achieved by losers.

—Ed Rosenblum
Brooklyn, NY

Dr. Francis Replies:

What Mr. Rosenblum is talking about is "separatism," not secession. If "secession" in the strict constitutional sense is meant (and that is precisely the sense in which most of those people on the right do mean it), then it is a theory that

by its nature applies only to states. If, on the other hand, we are going to talk about "separatism" in the larger sense of Mr. Rosenblum, then forget the states as well as the Constitution. We are now talking outright revolution, a contingency to which I am not necessarily opposed except for prudential reasons. We are no longer confined to discussion in terms of units of government recognized by the Constitution or to obligations and rights authorized by it. We may now talk about what groups are going to separate, and that discussion may lead us to religious, regional, ideological, racial, or economic (among other) identifications.

Mr. Rosenblum is certainly right that if unchecked immigration, multiculturalism, and what I call "Afro-racism" continue unabated, then the problem will be how to maintain "geopolitical cohesiveness" for those who do not fancy these developments. However, I am not yet willing to say that problem is now upon us. I retain the quaint belief that through effectively organized political and cultural activism on a national scale, it remains possible to reclaim the nation and its civilization. I think this is what most Americans who share our views of the national situation also want, and I cannot think that very many at the present time would be supportive of a serious secessionist or separatist movement. In any case, we have not yet seen activism of the kind I believe could be effective, and until we do see it and give it a fair try, we should not be willing to leap to what are at present merely fantasies and forms of right-wing infantilism like secessionism and separatism.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

AS AN ORTHODOX BIBLE-believing Christian, I find that much of what is said by the so-called "religious right" and "religious left"—to put it charitably—leaves a lot to be desired and is, ironically, un-Christian. This summer, on NBC's *Today* program, the head of the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, said: "What we're trying to do is not legislate our religious beliefs—which are personal and private. We're trying to

legislate our public policy views: tougher laws against crime and drugs, school choice, a balanced budget amendment, the right of kids to pray, protection of unborn life. These are public policy views."

This is not true. Christians ought to denounce this glib private/public dichotomy. Every "public policy view" of a Christian ought to be based on his or her religion, and Christians must hon-

estly and openly admit this. After all, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ commands us, in Matthew 5:37: "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." The last thing we need in our political process is more people speaking double-talk, fluent gibberish, about their real goals. I mean, if you can't trust a Christian to tell the truth, whom can you trust?

Indeed, Christians should welcome the charge that they are seeking to "impose" their views, and they should use this accusation to educate our people to certain forgotten facts, such as the fact that our country was founded by Bible-believing Christian "fanatics." One of the best books documenting how our laws are based on the Bible and Christianity—*Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (1983)—was written by a Jew, former Harvard Law Professor Harold Berman. So instead of running from the accusation that we are trying to write our religious views into law, we should joyfully plead guilty to this and explain how, historically, this is not at all "radical" or "extremist." If it's true, as is charged ad nauseam, that we are trying to Christianize America democratically through the ballot box and through our laws, so what? We're merely trying to restore legally what once was.

Last summer in the *Washington Post*, a self-described member of the "Christian left," Peter M. Storm, wondered how the Christian right, which says it's for "nonintrusive government," can favor the government deciding which books can be in a library, the government limiting its citizens' overseas travel, the government requiring schools to set aside time for religious exercises, the government regulating sexual activities. But Christians aren't *anarchists*. And Mr. Storm, who says that, like Christian conservatives, he also "reads and loves the Word of God," seems not to have read the Word of God at all.

Saint Paul tells us that our civil government, "the higher powers," "the powers that be," are "ordained of God," and whoever resists them resists God and "shall receive to themselves damnation." Indeed, Saint Paul says of our "rulers" that they "beareth not the sword in vain" (capital punishment) and are "ministers of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him who doeth evil." Thus, we must be subject to these rulers and "render

therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." As Christians, we may debate whether any Christian Coalition "public policy" may in fact be based on God's Word, but what is *not* debatable is that the purpose of civil government, and our laws, is to do God's will on earth as it is done in Heaven.

Mr. Storm says that "our religion should inform and prescribe our personal lives, but not our politics." But does he *really* believe this? Is he really for politics that are Godless? Saint Augustine observed centuries ago that government apart from God is nothing more than an organized band of robbers. Is this what Mr. Storm wants? I doubt it. And if he does want this, how would it work in real life? How could an individual be "privately" a Christian but cast his faith aside in his "public" life? This is impossible. And for a Christian, this would be un-Christian. We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord over *everything*—including the civil government.

Mr. Storm snidely says that he suspects God "does not care very much" about things like the tax code and the size of the United States budget deficit. But how can a man who says he "reads and loves the Word of God" say this? *Of course* God cares about these things. The Lord Jesus Christ indicates precisely such a concern when He speaks of things to be rendered to Caesar and things to be rendered to God (Matthew 22:21). And even the most cursory glance at a biblical concordance reveals that God has a lot to say about taxes, debt, and economics.

Interestingly, where Mr. Storm *does* think it is appropriate for "religious teachings" to lead to "support for government action," I find no Scripture. For example, he thinks it is "clearly in keeping with Christian beliefs" for the state to provide access to health care "for all mankind, including illegal aliens." Really? And where in the Bible does he see this? I ask because he cites no such "Christian beliefs," not one.

Mr. Storm says that mere mortals are not permitted "to prescribe for Him what His preferences must be." Well, amen! But God's "preferences" are revealed to us in that Word of His which Mr. Storm claims he "reads and loves." And we are *commanded* to obey them as "private" citizens and as "public" officeholders.

Finally, Mr. Storm caricatures the religious right's creed as: "What we are for, God must be for," when no member of this group I know or have ever heard quoted has said anything even remotely like this—and Mr. Storm quotes no such statement. He criticizes the religious right for "boxing up God and presenting Him in its own image," but this is exactly what *he* does when he says "our religion" should inform our "private" lives but not our "politics."

All Christians of the "right" or "left" must never forget that God is *not* a "religion." God is God. His Word is Truth. And It must govern every area of life, including politics. There is no such thing as partial sovereignty when it comes to God and His unchanging Word.

—John Lofton

"THERE IS NO GOD, and if there was, She made a mistake." That statement came from a colleague of mine during a class in philosophy. That is also the extent to which most public college students will hear the "G" word mentioned during their years of "higher" education.

Recent polls have shown that 89 percent of the American people believe in God. Of the 52 percent of American high school graduates who go to college, a clear majority attend public two- and four-year schools. Yet the faculties of these schools appear to come exclusively from the 11 percent of the populace that doesn't believe in God. That's not very "multicultural," and it shows little "respect for diversity."

Students, faculty, and staff alike at public colleges and universities tend to assume that the separation of church and state forbids teaching about God. The fact is, you *can* teach about God in a public college; the Supreme Court says so. Of the package of freedoms included in the First Amendment, three are relevant here: freedom of opinion, freedom to teach, and freedom of religion. Those freedoms mean that I can stand in front of a class of undergraduates and read chapter and verse from the Bible and not be charged with misconduct, harassed, suspended, or fired from my job. Not legally, at any rate. Last year, a federal judge upheld Leonard Jeffries'—Dr. Hate's—right to spew racial venom in his classes at New York's City College. Few, however, seem aware that the same right allows professors to teach religion.

Most people associated with public colleges and universities seem to interpret the First Amendment as guaranteeing freedom *from*, rather than freedom *of*, religion. Failing that, they conclude that religion is something obscene, to be tolerated only as long as it is conducted behind closed doors between consenting adults.

Many people seem to think that religion belongs only in private colleges. Private colleges are free to teach particular confessions, but true freedom of religion exists only in the public sphere. That's because while a Catholic college isn't legally bound to respect Islam, a public college is obligated to respect *all* religions.

Another beef against religion is that it involves forcing one's beliefs on students. One of my students took this to be the basis for banning prayer from schools. The ban on public school prayer, however, doesn't touch on my right to teach religion in a public college. Besides, all kinds of beliefs are forced on college students—socialism, multiculturalism, radical feminism, Afrocentrism, and the superiority of homosexuality—and woe to anyone who disagrees with them. These dogmas have long ago left the “ghetto” of special academic departments (e.g., Women's Studies), which are really political patronage programs. The half-baked theories of such political cults are now forced on students in English courses that all must take.

Thus do students learn that there is no such thing as sex, as opposed to gender, which is supposedly forced on children through a sexist, patriarchal conspiracy. Anyone who opposes homosexuality is mentally ill, and anyone who does not support condom distribution in the schools without parental choice—and the affirmation of teenage sex that goes with it—is wishing VD and AIDS on young girls. (The fate of young boys doesn't matter.) It is no coincidence that condom distribution and homosexuality are opposed primarily by religious people, particularly Christians.

Such propaganda is virulent in remedial courses at community colleges, which are the biggest money-makers for such schools. The exit exams required to advance from remedial, noncredit courses to credit courses routinely consist of feminist and antireligious propaganda, and students who challenge the left-wing catechisms thus risk their academic career. Since no one may enjoy the

patronage of gay, black, or women's studies departments who refuse to kneel at these idols, why can't history departments refuse to hire all but Catholics, or economics departments refuse to let all but free-market monetarists teach?

Lest socialist, or liberal, readers seek to write me off as a member of the “Christian right,” I'm a liberal, Jewish agnostic who has been accused of being a flaming atheist. Whatever my religious leanings, I'm a devout believer in education and the First Amendment. The history of Western religion is the history of our civilization's deepest passions and most sublime thoughts. No education can be called “liberal” that lacks its study.

—Nicholas Stix

GUIDEPOSTS MAGAZINE devoted the opening pages of its April issue to reminiscences about its founder, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, who died last December, on Christmas Eve, at the age of 95. Dr. Peale had been world-famous for his relentless optimism, his “strong belief in the power of prayer” and “strong belief in God,” and, most of all, for his belief in “the power of positive thinking”—the phrase that served as the title of his most popular book, which broke all records by staying glued onto the *New York Times* nonfiction best-seller list for 186 weeks.

A former editor of *Guideposts*, Leonard LeSourd, opens with an inspiring account of the way Dr. Peale dealt with a great catastrophe. The year was 1947, *Guideposts* was still a tender young thing, and one day its offices burned to the ground, destroying what is a publication's lifeblood, the entire subscription file. Dr. Peale called a meeting with publisher Raymond Thornburg, managing director Fred Decker, and LeSourd to discuss whether they should try to go on with the venture. As LeSourd tells it, Dr. Peale in his breezy way said, “You know, this could be the best thing that ever happened to *Guideposts*. Perhaps our neighbor Lowell Thomas [the famous author, traveler, and broadcaster, who had lent them the building that had just burned down] will tell his radio listeners about the fire and ask for help. Let's look at this fire as an opportunity, not a calamity.”

And just so, it came to pass. With faith in God, and positive thinking, and Lowell Thomas's mention on his radio program, renewals and new subscriptions

came flooding in, and *Guideposts* survived the fire with more subscribers than it had ever had before.

Truly an inspiring story, isn't it? It would be a pity to destroy its impact by mentioning the little detail that publisher Thornburg just happened to be married to Therbia, Lowell Thomas's sister. That sort of thing *do* help, brethren!

—William F. Rickenbacker

THE ASSAULT ON DENNY'S restaurants, a chain beloved by middle Americans and serving a million customers a day, helps us understand the real meaning of civil rights. Flagship, the chain's parent company, was forced to settle a group of lawsuits—choreographed by the Justice Department, the NAACP, and Saperstein, Mayeda & Goldstein of Oakland, California—for \$54 million. The firm will collect a total of \$8.7 million.

Denny's had to hire a “civil rights monitor,” introduce an internal espionage system to expose naughty comments, send its white employees to reeducation camps, endow blacks with franchises, and put a hostile black woman on Flagship's board of directors. Denny's also had to promise the NAACP that it would spend at least one million dollars hiring, training, and installing black managers.

By the end, more than 4,300 people had signed up as plaintiffs against Denny's, and the *New York Times* tried to recruit even more by publishing a toll-free number (1-800-GET-LOOT?). The operator answers: “Hello. Claims for the Denny's settlement. May I help you?” Yet there has been no admission of guilt, no trial by jury, and no sworn statements in court.

The accusations against the company boil down to minor service complaints by customers who may have been set-ups, assertions by disgruntled ex-employees, smears by sworn enemies, and liberal media hype. For example, in May 1993, six black Secret Service agents entered a Denny's in Annapolis, Maryland. President Clinton was giving a speech at the nearby Naval Academy. In a recent *New York Times* version of the event, the agents were “refused a table.” A *Times* editorial repeated the charge: “The black Secret Service agents” were “refused a table at a Denny's” as “their white colleagues were seated and

served."

A more honest version of events was reported in the equally anti-Denny's *Washington Post* a year ago: "Six black Secret Service agents ordered food at a Denny's in Annapolis that took so long to arrive, they say, that in effect they were denied service. . . . The six black agents sat together. Their supervisor, also black, sat among white agents. All 21 agents, who had less than an hour to eat, ordered in rapid succession. When the six black agents realized that all the white agents and the supervisor had been served but they had not, they sent [agent Robin] Thompson to ask the waitress about it. She said their meals were on the way. When Thompson demanded to see the manager, the waitress said he was on the phone. White agents [have said] the waitress rolled her eyes after turning to leave the black agents' table."

The *Post* further reports that the six agents were the last to order, that their orders were complex, and that they did get their food. But the agents "refused it because there was no time to eat." "We had to go to Roy Rogers and eat in the van," one S.S. type whined to the *Post*. Poor babies.

Let's review. The President was speaking nearby, meaning the restaurant was crowded. It was the busy state capital, at noon, but all 21 agents were seated. All were served, but some later than others. That's a "civil rights violation"?

The implication is that no white man has ever experienced late service in a restaurant. None has ever sat and watched people who were seated after he was served first, and maybe even finish their meal before he was served. And to look at things from the other side of the counter, what harried waitress might not roll her eyes at a table of surly bureaucrats, regardless of the root causes of their rage?

Yet, at the first sign of delay, civil servant Thompson marched up to the waitress and loudly demanded the food. The waitress said it was on the way. Thompson then yelled that he wanted to see the manager. But the latter was on the phone. Naturally, this series of blatantly racist acts—by white taxpayers against black tax-consumers—became a nationwide class-action suit with a \$54 million penalty.

On that very day, perhaps not coincidentally, Denny's had settled another suit in California for \$34.8 million, including \$6.8 million for Saperstein,

Mayeda & Goldstein. But the California case was restricted to that state. The suit stemming from Annapolis gathered plaintiffs from all over the country, except California. In retrospect, it's clear that the lawyers and the Justice Department wanted to take their racial racket on the road. It's even possible that the well-to-do feds were provoking a working-class woman as part of a scheme orchestrated in Oakland. The agents were employed, after all, by Bill Clinton. An actual trial might have answered this question, but when the plaintiffs' lawyers run the show, the media are the only court. Even granting good intentions by the agents, is it now illegal to roll your eyes? If so, I can think of a number of clerks of color who are going to be in deep trouble.

In the incident that kicked off the California suit, black federal judge Kenneth Hoyt had to wait "an inordinate length of time for service" at a Denny's in Eureka, California. (Is there no end to the white man's perfidy?) While he waited, he claims, fellow patrons taunted him with racial epithets. Sure they did, judge. This sounds like one of the Fibs of Racism that festoon the media. And indeed, there is no proof it took place.

But let's suppose someone did make a remark, perhaps in response to the judge's loud, pompous complaints about discrimination. Was Denny's supposed to toss out the taunting customer? Of course. That's "civil rights." But if a black taunts a white, throwing out the black would be "a civil rights violation," and Denny's would be fined another \$54 million.

The California lawyers began shopping for plaintiffs as soon as the Crime of Annapolis was publicized, and indeed it was major international news for several days. In one Virginia case, a black choir director with three busloads of kids pulled up to a Denny's at 11:00 P.M. on a Sunday night and demanded quick service. Only one cook was on duty, so the night manager suggested the bigger Denny's just up the road. KKK! The choir director filed suit.

As the pile-on continued, Jesse Jackson went on a national victimology tour, and there were NAACP pickets at Denny's restaurants all over the country. Leading the lynch mob was the Justice Department's newly appointed head of civil rights, Deval L. Patrick (known to some of us as D'Evil). During confirmation hearings, he was hailed as the

moderate alternative to Lani Guinier. Yet how could Guinier's voting schemes be worse than Patrick's assault on private enterprise? And he assured us, just in case we were worried, that Denny's was only the beginning.

It surely is. Yet with the central state, the elites, and the media at war with the majority of taxpayers, and with redistribution from the productive to the parasitic our major economic activity, Americans may begin asking how the feds came to require involuntary servitude from whites. Before the passage of the 13th Amendment, blacks complained about being forced to serve whites in service occupations. That's why the amendment abolished not only slavery, but also involuntary servitude. Blacks could no longer be forced to wait on whites. But civil rights is the new involuntary servitude, and whites better hop to it. Or they can realize that the two things that distinguish a freeman from a slave are the freedom of association and the freedom of contract. Whether we look at the economy from the standpoint of liberty, prosperity, or justice, it's clear that civil rights laws have enslaved the majority. It's also clear that it's time for a slave revolt.

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

THE TENTH AMENDMENT is alive and well in Ohio. On June 28, right before the state legislature recessed, Representative Michael Wise and Senator Grace Drake introduced into the Ohio General Assembly "House Concurrent Resolution No. 44" with 27 house cosponsors and 3 senate cosponsors. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Economic Affairs and Federal Relations, where it sits until committee members return and schedule hearings. My representative reports that our legislature will not reconvene for any significant period of time until after January.

Our organization, We the People, is a loose network of people interested in constitutional issues, and we are busily building a network of allies who are sick of seeing our liberty chipped away by federal mandate. We are meeting with our representatives and taking note of their voting records and stands on constitutional issues. We, together with organizations like United We Stand, The Christian Coalition, garden clubs, cafeteria meeting groups, and with any in-

interested individuals we can find, will make sure our governor, state representatives, state senators, state attorney general, even county sheriffs hear our message: "Get Washington out of here! The 10th Amendment says they don't belong here! Ohio is to be governed by Ohioans, as dictated by the Constitution!"

Our goal is a minimum of 100,000 letters. Testimony before the House Committee will come soon, followed by citizen delegations to the governor and each state representative and senator; demonstrations with the Ohio state flag proudly waved are a real possibility.

The next step will be to enact implementation legislation along the lines of Colorado's State Sovereignty Resolution, which sets up the "review" mechanism to identify which federal mandates the state will and will not obey, based on whether the mandates meet a "Constitutional Test." This may not impress the feds, so Ohio should set up accounts through which moneys for major federal programs, such as gasoline taxes and federal license fees, must pass. Ohio will make monthly disbursements to the feds from these accounts, but *only* if the funds are used for purposes that the Constitution allows. Then, if the feds withhold funds from certain programs involving the state, Ohio will simply stop making monthly payments and retain the funds in the escrow account. In Colorado, the amount of money sent to the feds compared to what comes back to the state is within 2 percent.

The issue is pregnant with possibility. None of the 10th Amendment Resolutions I have read qualifies the word "mandate" with the adjective "unfunded." The issue is not simply to stop the imposition of hidden taxes on the states and on the people. The issue is to counter and confront unconstitutional mandates that run roughshod over a state's right to republican government under Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution and an individual's inalienable rights under the Constitution. The issue is that the checks and balances at the federal level no longer work: the three branches are, in concert, abrogating Americans' freedoms with virtually every new law passed. It is time to shake the dust off the "forgotten amendment" and for the states to enforce it, for we are witnesses to the exact situation that the amendment was written to guard against, something we, because of our

apathy, have allowed to happen.

The 10th Amendment Resolution is sweeping the country. It has passed the legislatures of Colorado, Hawaii, Missouri, and California. It has passed the Senate and House of Illinois (not a joint resolution). It has passed the House of Oklahoma and of Louisiana (where it passed unanimously). It has been introduced into the general assemblies of Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey. It has sponsors in Pennsylvania, Florida, Nebraska, Idaho, Utah, Connecticut, Washington, Maine, Wisconsin, and Texas who plan to introduce the resolution in upcoming sessions. Representatives from Massachusetts and Tennessee have inquired about it, and the Georgia State Chair for United We Stand America is working to have it passed there. People are networking in 49 states now (every state except Vermont), all with the intention of waking up their state legislators to the constitutional means our Founding Fathers granted us.

On August 27, the South Carolina State Libertarian Party passed a resolution about the "Crime Bill" that said "honest citizens of reason cannot abide illegal laws, designed for whatever cause, that would deny lawful citizens liberty hard won and unalienable God-given rights and provide a framework for despotism and tyranny now or in the future. Honor and duty compel us to call for the immediate repeal of this illegal act." And in the absence of such a repeal, "we must respectfully call upon the Legislature of the sovereign State of South Carolina to issue an ultimatum stating that they will not suffer this illegal Act to be enforced within the borders of South Carolina, and, further, if agents of the Federal government attempt to enforce this illegal Act within the borders of South Carolina, it will be considered a direct violation of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and the state will take whatever legal action is necessary to preserve its sovereignty." The resolution then urges all citizens to join the Citizen Militia now forming in South Carolina.

Other states are acting boldly, too. Witness Governor Pete Wilson in California. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on August 26 that "Governor Pete Wilson has ordered his administration to defy the federal government and refuse to implement the so-called motor-voter registration law unless Congress forwards the money to pay for the new program."

The article said that "Wilson's Finance Department estimates that it will cost the state \$35.8 million *annually* [my emphasis] to implement the law." They, of course, are expecting a challenge and are preparing to fight.

They, like we, now realize that the legal means to resist the statism thrust upon us are in our founding documents, in the 10th Amendment, which needs no interpretation as to what powers the states possess. The task before us is to educate our state legislators to their responsibilities to protect us from unconstitutional mandates from a federal government that wants to usurp the guarantee of republican government.

Anyone who wants to join this fight can call the Council for Domestic Relations at 217-787-8454, or fax 217-854-4343, to find out his or her state coordinator. The organization will send a 10th Amendment Resolution packet for a three dollar donation sent to CDR, P.O. Box 3362, Springfield, Illinois 62708.

—Carl Jahnes

WHEN MEXICO defeated Ireland in the July World Cup soccer tournament, some 5,000 "fans" turned Pacific Boulevard in Huntington Park, California, into a riot zone. Radical politics, not sports, lay at the heart of the riot. Some 300 police officers were called to the scene, and according to one news account, when the "fans" reached the "barricades at Pacific and Florence, they stopped, many walked out to the intersection and began shouting 'Viva Mexico,' as well as some anti-U.S. and anti-police slogans. One group burned a U.S. flag." Gunfire erupted from some of the "fans," and as police officers scrambled, other "fans" were heard shouting, "Down with Pete Wilson and you stupid cops!"

My outrage at witnessing an American city being terrorized by a mob of screaming, rampaging Latinos is equaled only by the contempt I feel for the public officials and media who continue to call such barbarity a "celebration." A celebration of what? The outcome of a sports event? Or the knowledge that American citizens have become so intimidated by ethnic groups that the only weapon law enforcement officers are permitted to use to stop the destruction of a city is pepper spray? Or that the "only" recourse left to law-abiding American citizens is to fork over more of their

hard-earned money to pay for extra police and to repair the damage left in the wake of the "celebrants," while making plans for the next "celebration"?

One need not be Nostradamus to predict that there *will* be another incident of mindless vandalism by ethnic groups who are all too aware that in America we don't punish acts of violence, looting, or desecration of our flag but instead express our understanding of their "exuberance" and then pray that the next time it won't be *our* home or business that they consider their "spoils of victory."

But such ethnic violence is the norm in California. When an anti-illegal alien rights organization in Marin County attempted to attend in May what had been advertised as a public meeting of illegal-alien activists, the group must have felt much like the defenders of the Alamo, because they certainly were outnumbered. They were there to protest the establishment of a *tax-funded* hiring hall that would be used to find employment for illegal aliens. But when they attempted to enter the community center (also tax-funded), they were greeted by 300 hostile Latinos yelling their version of "Yankee, Go Home," followed by a punch thrown at one of the citizens. Justifiably, the recipient of the punch retaliated, after which police in "riot gear" were called in to quell what one news report called a "clash." "This is a crime, this is an outrage," shouted one of the scheduled Latino speakers when the meeting was canceled.

I agree, but it wasn't the cancellation of a gathering of anarchists hell-bent on aiding illegal aliens and violating the immigration laws of our country that was the crime. Indeed, the crime lies in the shameful apathy of American citizens and their elected representatives that allows such treasonous activity to occur.

If what happened in Marin County, California, was an isolated incident, it would be reason enough for American citizens in every area of the country to start straightening their backbones and fighting the immigration invasion of our country. But this is by no means a unique case. For instance, residents and business owners in Silver Spring, Maryland, have already spent \$40,000 of their own money attempting to block a "HUD-funded" hiring hall for illegal aliens that was purchased, furnished, and managed with federal tax dollars. This occurred after officials in Montgomery

County, Maryland, decided to spend a \$300,000 block grant from HUD on improving the lives not of poor *Americans* in need of low-cost housing but of illegal aliens. These same officials spent \$20,000 to hire county workers to assist these illegal aliens with assorted other problems and awarded an additional \$57,000 to Takoma Park, Maryland, for the same purpose. Takoma Park, some may remember, passed a referendum less than two years ago that allowed "illegal aliens" not only to vote but *to hold political office*.

The next time you see a newspaper report of a "hiring hall" being erected to get hundreds of illegal aliens off the streets of your cities (as the answer to the immigration problem), you might ask yourself what will happen when the aliens so outnumber the citizens of this country that when the former scream "Yankee, Go Home," you realize you no longer have a home to return to.

Of course, this is exactly the goal for many of our political elite, as I.N.S. Commissioner Doris Meissner's speech to the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Law and National Security last May made perfectly clear. It was captioned: "We Are Transforming Ourselves." The fact that she used the royal "we" to imply that all American citizens are responsible for this "cultural transformation" is not only arrogant but an insult to our intelligence. To the contrary, the public has no control over presidential appointees to the I.N.S., and its only "voice" in matters of immigration is through their elected representatives in Congress. So when Meissner declares, "I do believe that the Immigration Service should be more than a vassal for Congress," she exhibits a complete disregard for the wishes of American citizens and utter contempt for their justified outrage at seeing their country "transformed." It is eminently clear that Meissner and others of her ilk would far rather be a "vassal" for the millions of Third World immigrants and illegal aliens that annually enter our country than be a servant of American law and public opinion. According to her, "Immigrants believe more fervently in American values than those that have been here for generations." I, for one, would like to see Meissner explain these values to the husband of the German tourist who was viciously murdered by "Asian immigrants."

We do not need a degree in political

science to know that any government official who maintains that "it is extraordinary how smoothly we are transforming ourselves into an even more diverse nation," while race riots are a daily occurrence and states are going bankrupt paying the costs of that "diversity," should be removed from office—immediately. Not only has Doris Meissner demonstrated her inability to deal with the daily invasion of our country, she has callously ignored the will of the people for a moratorium on *all* immigration for an extended period of time. She clearly has more interest in "making citizens out of amnestied illegal aliens" than in safeguarding the sovereignty of our country.

—Ruth Coffey

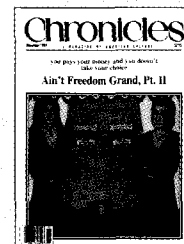
OBITER DICTA: This month, we bid farewell to our assistant editor, Christine Haynes, and welcome a new editorial assistant, Michael Washburn. Christine is leaving to attend graduate school at the University of Chicago, where she is the recipient of a Century Fellowship. She will study modern European cultural history and work part-time for the University of Chicago Press. Michael hails from Brooklyn, New York, by way of Grinnell College, where he majored in English and founded and edited the *Grinnell Spectator*, a reactionary student newspaper. We wish both Christine and Michael good luck in their new ventures.

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DECEMBER 1994/9

by Samuel Francis

Religious Wrong

Despite the ocean of ink that has been spilled in the last several months on the "religious right," perhaps the most sensible comment about it, or at least about its journalistic coverage and political analysis, was penned by John F. Persinos in an article published in the magazine *Campaigns and Elections* last September. "When examined with a coldly nonpartisan eye," wrote Mr. Persinos, "it turns out that much of the mainstream's reportage on the Christian Right is a hodge-podge of clichés, regurgitated conventional wisdom, and fatuous analysis." Of course, there is hardly any subject that mainstream political journalism in this country touches of which the exact same thing could not be said, but there seems to be something about the combination of "religious" and "right" that encourages the construction of veritable monuments of the very kind of "fatuous analysis" of which Mr. Persinos wrote. There are, in my mind, two main reasons why American journalists and analysts so smashingly succeed in making fools of themselves whenever they talk about the "religious right."

First, with the Clinton administration in office, the political left needs an enemy against which it can rail for the purposes of raising money for its various causes, increasing the subscription levels of its magazines, and rallying the dozing voters to the tattered banners of liberal congressional candidates. The prospect of Falwell, Robertson, Buchanan, North, and Helms snooping into your bedroom, burning books in your local library, and outlawing lingerie advertisements in your local newspapers is probably enough to elicit a few dollars from even the most skin-flinted progressives, and, just as people on the political right have often resorted to similar tactics of scare and smear against their friends on the left, some liberal activists probably really believe their own propaganda about the religious right, a belief that contributes to the very kind of fatuity Mr. Persinos mentioned.

The other reason for the flood of rhetorical cow drop about the religious right is that, for a certain sort of mental-

ity common on the left, the prospect of being persecuted is just too delicious to pass up. Leftism of all kinds often takes its moral energy from its own paranoia, its deeply rooted obsession that it stands alone against the forces of reaction and that those forces are on the eve of triumph, and while the left is invariably the first to head for the beaches when a real triumph of reaction actually takes place, to stand athwart the petty and usually harmless despots who try to close down local porno stores and to feel the nearly erotic stimulus that one is about to go to the stake oneself is always a lot of fun as well as immensely invigorating to the leftist ego.

We do not, therefore, need to look very far to find reasons for the yelling and screaming about the sinister emergence of the religious right to which the nation was obliged to listen last summer. Part of the hysteria was deliberately engineered for political and fund-raising purposes, and the engineering was successful precisely because most adherents of the left are both credulous enough to believe that an inquisitorial tide is about to engulf the country and self-important enough to imagine that they will be the first victims of the reaction. It is not remarkable, then, that the emergence of a religious right excites people on the secular left; what is remarkable, however, is that the religious right exists at all.

It is remarkable because not only is the United States today, like most economically developed societies everywhere, a largely secular culture but because the American right itself has not until fairly recently expressed much interest in religion. Prior to World War II, hardly any major figure on the American right was religious at all, and some were more or less outspoken enemies of religion in general and Christianity in particular. H.L. Mencken, Albert Jay Nock, and most of the group that Justin Raimondo identifies as the "Old Right" of the anti-New Deal, anti-interventionist orientation were not in the least concerned with religion except to mock it. Robert A. Taft, who generally shared the political views of this movement as he led its political efforts, himself seems to have lived and died as a thoroughly conventional Episcopalian, a calling almost

indistinguishable from outright heathenism. The considerably less libertarian persuasion grouped around the racist right, including Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant, was explicitly anti-Christian, while the "American fascist" Lawrence Dennis (as well as Ezra Pound) was also either uninterested in religion or hostile to it. Even in the 1950's, the founder of the John Birch Society, Robert Welch, was a professed atheist and admirer of the Transcendentalist shaman Ralph Waldo Emerson, while Welch's one-time colleague, the late and brilliant Revilo P. Oliver, was as well-known for his bitterness toward what he called "Jesus juice" as he was for his animosity to Jews and their supposed conspiracy.

It was only in the post-World War II right, the right of William F. Buckley Jr. and the late Russell Kirk, that religion came to be closely linked with American conservatism. This development was partly due to the general revival of religion in the postwar era that gave us such mainstream icons of holiness as Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale and the cult of "civic religion" in the 1950's, but also partly due to the emergence of anticommunism as a central issue of the right, as well as a dawning perception that what was occurring in the West as well as under communism was not simply a violation of the fundamental institutional categories of the civilization of the West but an implicit abandonment of and an ever more explicit attack on them. It is hardly surprising, given the victimization of Christianity and Christians by communists, that Christian clergymen and thinkers were in the forefront of anticommunist movements, that they imparted their theological commitments to their political and social commentary, and that their thought mainly identified the West and its survival with Christianity rather than with other staples of conservative concern such as property and the free market, constitutionalism and the rule of law, nationality, race, or social hierarchy.

But conservative intellectualism, whatever thoughts it entertained about religion, had little practical or political impact either before or after World War II, and the emergence of the religious

right in the 1970's owes little to the abstruse theology, obscure liturgical controversies, and head-spinning political theory with which so many conservative eggheads occupied themselves in the 1950's and 60's. What its emergence has to do with is a sociopolitical phenomenon that is far broader and far more significant as a world-historical force than either organized conservatism or the religious right itself perceives.

The "religious right" is merely the current incarnation of the ongoing Middle American Revolution, a cultural and political movement that has underlain the political efforts of the American right since the end of World War II. Despite what many right-wing sages would like to believe, that movement never had much to do with their perennial holy cow, the free market, but rather with the perception that the white middle-class core of American society and culture was being evicted from its historic position of cultural and political dominance and becoming an exploited and repressed proletariat. It was this perception, rudimentary as it was, that largely underlay the political movements involving Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and similar figures in the Depression and later Senator McCarthy, whose anti-communist radicalism is explicable only as a vehicle for Middle American resistance to the ruling class that had by the 1950's displaced the traditional bourgeois elite of the nation.

Since the end of World War II, the American right as a mass political force in the United States has been driven by three successive causes. The first, anti-communism, carried not only McCarthy but also Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon in the 1950's, though Eisenhower merely piggy-backed on the synthesis of anticommunism and Middle American class and ethnic consciousness that Nixon and McCarthy had so brilliantly forged. The second, opposition to the civil rights revolution based mainly in the South and later in northern white working-class suburbs, carried Barry Goldwater, George Wallace, and (again) Richard Nixon, though Mr. Goldwater never understood what he was leading and continues to this day to imagine that it was a movement for "individual freedom" (a delusion that helped him lose the support of northern working-class voters) rather than a social convulsion for the preservation of class, ethnic, and cultural dominance.

The third cause of the right is now and has been what was called in the 1970's the "social issue" and in the 90's the "cultural war," and, far more explicitly and effectively than the earlier anti-communism and bourgeois individualism espoused by the right of the 50's and 60's, it focuses on resisting the erosion of traditional morality and the traditional middle-class social and economic dominance the morality codified. "Cultural" issues were indeed present in but remained largely tangential to the right-wing efforts of the earlier decades and emerged as prevalent concerns only in reaction to the cultural assaults of the 1960's and afterwards. The most obvious way to defend a moral code is through religion, and the most obvious people to defend it are religious leaders and their followers. Hence, religion emerged logically as the appropriate vehicle for the expression of Middle American moral, social, and cultural counterrevolution.

What follows from this analysis of the religious right as it exists today is that what ultimately drives its adherents is not religion in the ordinary sense. What drives them is the perception—accurate in my view—that the culture their religion reflects and defends is withering

and that withering portends a disaster for themselves, their class, their country, and their civilization. Religion happens to be a convenient vehicle for their otherwise unarticulated and well-founded fears. But while it is a convenient vehicle and a more effective one than those that carried the right in earlier days, it is not the most effective vehicle the right could have.

This is not to say that the religious right is composed of hypocrites who use religion for political ends. With the possible exception of most of its more prominent leaders, it is not. Most adherents of the religious right are sincerely and seriously religious; but you can be sincerely and seriously religious without being political and without being political in the fashion of the religious right. It is not religion that drives; it is the legitimate frustrations of a social class that has been bludgeoned and betrayed by its established leaders for more than 50 years.

Religion is not the most effective political and ideological vehicle for expressing and publicly vindicating the frustrations that animate the Middle American Revolution because the Christianity of the right simply does not encompass very many Middle American



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interests. While the religious right is effectively armed with an ideology and a worldview that enhances its militancy, its energy in mounting effective political and cultural opposition at the local level, and its alienation from the dominant elite and the elite's regime in the leviathan state, the movement's aims remain too limited. The real problem with the religious right is that, in the long run, its religious vehicle will not carry it home. If they ever ended abortion, restored school prayer, outlawed sodomy, and banned pornography, I suspect most of its followers would simply declare victory and retire. But having accomplished all of that, the Christian right would have done absolutely nothing to strip the federal government of the power it has seized throughout this century, restore a proper understanding and enforcement of the Constitution and of republican government, prevent the inundation of the country by anti-Western immigrants, stop the cultural and racial dispossession of the historic American

people, or resist the absorption of the American nation into a multicultural and multiracial globalist regime. Indeed, the Christian Right for the most part does not care about these issues or even perceive them as issues, and insofar as it does, it often lines up on the wrong side of them.

Yet these are the principal lines of conflict in the Middle American Revolution, and it is by winning on them, rather than on school prayer and creationism, that Middle American interests will be served and the incumbent ruling class and its power apparatus will be overthrown. While the purely religious perspective of the Christian Right helps to radicalize it more than anti-communism, libertarianism, or other and older ideologies of the right did, it also narrows the vision of what really demands a challenge from the right—the domination by a hostile ruling class that uses state power to entrench itself and to wreck the country, the culture, and the middle class as well. Thus, the religious

orientation of the Christian Right serves to create what Marxists like to call a “false consciousness” for Middle Americans, an ideology that appeals to and mobilizes a sociopolitical class but which does not accurately codify the interests and needs of the class and in the end only deflects its political action and works to buttress and reinforce the dominant regime.

What is needed now is not a vehicle that will trap the right into a large but limited cultural and political ghetto but one that can steer it toward an authentic and serious understanding of the real needs of the Middle Americans who are attracted to the Christian Right as well as others who are repelled by it but who increasingly perceive how they are exploited and misruled by the elite. If a movement should appear that could articulate that kind of vision, religious or not in focus, it could successfully mobilize and lead the core of the nation and the civilization as it needs to be and ought to be led. ◊

LIBERAL ARTS



LESBIAN AVENGERS

According to the *European* last August, a “girl gang” known as the Lesbian Avengers protested the statue outside Buckingham Palace commemorating Queen Victoria, who, the Avengers believed, had never “acknowledged the existence of lesbians.” Gathered around the statue, the Avengers “ate fire, banged drums,” and waved placards conveying their disapproval. The *European* said this was one of many “Cat-Woman like stunts [intended] to attract the media and force society to recognize their status.”

Credit In Unum

by Richard Moore

To fill the moral void
when God Almighty dies,
some shall believe in Freud,
some in the Nobel Prize.
All-yielding, nothing loath,
Sibyl believed in both.

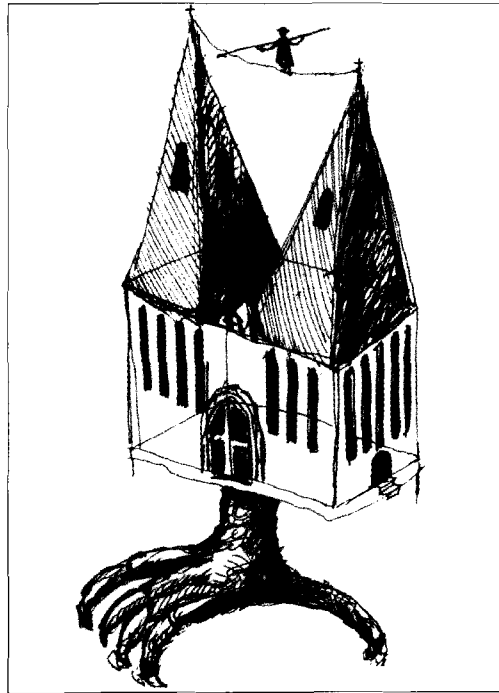
Her faith was eager, touching;
it made my heart glow warmer.
I liked to see her clutching
that holy man, the former,
but I could best get at her
by lashing at the latter.

"A Nobel Prize for *him*?
Why, Frost—like several fellows—
shines bright enough to dim
glimmers from twenty Bellows."
She, waking to a jury,
leapt from the bed in fury.

Her kitchen pots went bang.
"Loving relationships
cannot survive," she sang,
"such jabs, such brutal quips."
I tried to soothe, finagle
at breakfast—a stale bagel.

I bit its crust and—tasting
truths that my crunching bruited—
departed, shriveled, wasting,
remorselessly uprooted,
who'd been a happy weed in
her lush and lovely Eden.

God of our winter chill,
why must You be so dead?
Had You been living still,
Sibyl had stayed in bed
and love, forgetting wrath,
bloomed in her primrose path.



The Lesson of the Roaring Parrot

by Thomas Fleming

There is an old cliché that no man is a hero to his valet. Some have been tempted to reply that it depends on the man, but I think it depends, rather, on the valet. To an observant eye, the world is peopled by ordinary men making strenuous, even heroic efforts to get through the day without cheating their customers or betraying their wives. Even everyday objects may interest a poet, if his imagination is strong enough, because there is nothing so banal that, if held up to inspection, it cannot illuminate the world. We cannot always be mooning over skylarks and Chinese emperors. For a really strong imagination a louse will do as well as a nightingale.

A man might write a great novel about life here in Rockford, so long as he is really willing to live his life fully in such a place. In the case of Rockford, perhaps an editorial will suffice, but even here the most ordinary object is worth a moment of reflection. A telephone book, for example, is a strange thing, if you will take the time to think about it. In very small towns, such things are hardly necessary, since everybody knows everyone else, and if a stranger comes to a Wisconsin hamlet looking for an Anderson, he may find out that everyone in town who is not a Larson is an Anderson. Even small town Yellow Pages are uninformative, unless it is an area that attracts tourists, because the locals already know where to go for everything, and it is not as if they had a great deal of choice.

In larger cities, even such minuscule large cities as Rockford, the telephone books are less coherent but more informative. Apart from the prevalence of Swedish, German, and Italian names, not too much could be concluded from an examination of the Rockford directory. The Yellow Pages, on the other hand, are filled with lures and hooks and advertising slogans

designed to beguile the unwary into thinking that there might really be a good restaurant, an interesting store, or some place to go in the evening. We usually return from such expeditions defeated, but this does not prevent us from opening the telephone book the next time we are playing Don Quixote, and once again it will be the inedible meal that we find rather than the impossible dream.

When community is gone, there is still the telephone book that connects the hundred thousand telephones of Rockford in a conversation made up of wrong numbers, burial plot solicitations, final warnings, and restaurant reservations. Peggy Noonan's thousand points of light was only a flicker compared with the blaze created by the vast neural network of a hundred million American telephones. Our place in the world is defined by the area code and number that expose us to any discount broker or insurance salesman with a finger, and if we think we can escape by paying for an unlisted number, there are unscrupulous people whose business it is to sell unlisted numbers, and there is no protection against the lawn service or pollster with computerized dialing. "If you would like more information, press one. If you would like to place an order, press two." And if you would like to keep these jerks off your back, get their name and number and start calling them up at three o'clock in the morning.

The telephone directory is the address book of the artificial community of commerce, and along with city directories and mailing lists, it is the sacred scripture of our national religion. It is, therefore, not merely offensive when evangelical Christians presume to put out their own directory—here in Rockford it is called *The Shepherd's Guide*—it is blasphemous. Most of

the businesses listed in *The Shepherd's Guide* have not been content simply to list themselves, but they have gone so far as to sign a statement of faith, stipulating that "I have received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior" and pledging "to hold the highest Biblical code of ethics in my business transactions."

The local newspaper has been uncharacteristically civil in reporting on this *Guide*, but at least one businessman wrote in to say that the project violated the first rule of American business, which is to keep religion out. I do not actually recall hearing that rule pronounced at any of the three Rotary meetings I have attended, but perhaps the Rotarians do not divulge their mysteries to the profane. Some groups certainly do act as if they do not separate religion from business. Catholic schools and churches, for example, sell advertising to Catholic businessmen, and in some cases the church urges parishioners to give their trade to the Catholic businessmen who have taken out advertising. My Lutheran friends also seem to know where every Lutheran appliance store or carpet shop is located, and my Jewish friends are just as well-informed. Blacks are always issuing appeals to patronize black-owned businesses, and here in Rockford blacks came out with their own Yellow Pages just a few weeks before the Evangelicals did. Obviously, many of us like to shop where we know and are known by people, and such parochialism can only be regarded as a sin in the eyes of those who either have no religion or who find such a pretense useful.

The non-Christian businessman's denunciation is only one small indication that we do not live in a Christian country or even a God-fearing country. Jefferson's private opinion that there was a wall of separation between church and state has been turned into a constitutional rule establishing an iron curtain that confines religious activity to the church and home. If only some of Jefferson's other opinions could achieve the status of law. A few weeks ago the *Chicago Tribune* published a typically idiotic piece by some professor or other, saying he believed Jefferson would today be on the side of those who were trying to keep religion out of public life.

Oh, really? This is the same Jefferson who feared and loathed the Supreme Court as an uncontrolled agent of tyranny back in the benign days of John Marshall, whom he would have impeached for his violation of states' rights, and yet now he would be supporting the federal courts in their drive to subordinate all local institutions to the power of the government in Washington? I am convinced that the vast majority of Constitutional lawyers and "political scientists" cannot read English, much less understand the Constitution.

But why go on? Real Americans already know that the federal government has declared war on religion and that not even the fig leaf of the 14th Amendment—passed illegally at gun point—can sanction court rulings against crèches in public squares, prayer in schools, and the parents' right to prevent their daughter from murdering their grandchild. We know all this or ought to, but what can we do, poor, helpless subjects of this vast state, to resist, or if not to resist at least to survive and thrive without collaborating with our oppressors?

For a variety of reasons, we must pay our taxes. In the first place, they will come and get us if we do not, and it is a good deal harder to be good parents and faithful friends when we are deprived of our property and sent to federal prison. More importantly, Christians are commanded to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and to the extent we continue to enjoy the protection of the police, sue in the courts for damages, and drive on the roads, we are obliged to obey the laws

and pay our taxes. If a man were to sell up and move into the wilderness, he might be morally justified in repudiating the government, but they will still hunt him down and shoot him or his family for resisting arrest.

If few of us are ready to play the part of Randy Weaver, our situation is not hopeless, and projects like *The Shepherd's Guide* point the way. We cannot always shop with Lutherans or Baptists or Catholics, but we can choose to keep our money out of the hands of unbelievers and persecutors. In fact, *The Shepherd's Guide* is itself a good deal too evangelical for my taste. While it does list Catholic churches, I cannot seem to find any obviously Catholic or Episcopalian businesses. There are surprisingly few Lutherans in the book, and under insurance I see neither the Lutheran Brotherhood nor the Aid Association for Lutherans. Of course, it is their business, and if they do not want mine, they are doing the right thing.

I should be the last man to object to any of the most provincial or more parochial conspiracies, but perhaps it is time for a broader front. Various religious groups have over the years recommended specific boycotts against corporations that purveyed pornography or supported infanticide, but it is time to up the ante, so to speak, and to declare economic war against all the corporations that are attacking Christendom. If some Christian coalition would actually do the work and draw up a reliable index of prohibited businesses, I would cheerfully take the pledge to abstain. In the meantime, we might think in terms of a few obvious categories.

Why not begin by refusing to watch television shows or go to films whose producers and stars are flagrantly opposed to every decency? Excepting for a moment the cases of real artists like Martin Scorsese, who continues to play the part of the perpetual ex-Catholic, why not simply refuse to cut Hollywood any slack? If Tom Hanks wants to promote homosexuality, it is not enough not to go see *Philadelphia*—he did not expect us to. But if we refuse to buy tickets to *Forrest Gump* or even to rent the video, then he and his masters will begin to get the picture. The same treatment ought to be given everyone who does an AIDS benefit concert (e.g., Kathy Mattea) or sports an AIDS ribbon at an awards ceremony. At least we can still watch Clint Eastwood and Gene Hackman.

The same principle applies to studios and producers and stars involved with obviously blasphemous films; companies that use nuns, priests, and heavenly voices in their commercials; publishers that put out books like *Passover Plot*; and writers who give interviews to *Playboy*. Why be generous? I avoid movies with Barbara Streisand, because she is ugly, and Eddie Murphy, because he is foul-mouthed in his comedy routines. A year or two ago I was about to do a television spot on the Constitution, but as soon as I found out it was being produced by Time-Warner—the producers of "Cop-Killer," I withdrew. I could go on, "but the task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to you . . ."

There are more issues than blasphemy and immorality to concern morally responsible consumers. Many large companies give money to the baby-killers at Planned Parenthood and NOW, and in recent years this grisly index has included Pillsbury, Levi Strauss, General Mills, and American Express. The next time you are eating the processed food products at the Olive Garden, you might consider that you are destroying more than your taste buds and digestion.

Some major corporations have signed antiwhite affirmative

action agreements with the NAACP or Jesse Jackson. If it is only because they feel threatened, let them begin to understand that majorities can threaten as well as minorities. At one time, that list included the many popular soft drink companies and many fast-food chains. My solution is to drink iced tea and stop at the diner. Down in Georgia, the Holiday Inn and other chain motels are refusing to fly the Georgia state flag, because it includes the Stars and Bars. What, you say your great-grandfather enlisted in the Grand Army of the Republic? In that case, he probably would not want to see the flag of his enemies dishonored. By the golden rule of nationalism, if you want your own nation, culture, and religion respected, you must acknowledge the respect that is due to others. I prefer not to buy my groceries either from Ku-Kluxers or from those who fund their black counterparts in the NAACP.

Since some boycotts are illegal or, at the very least, invitations to lawsuits, I am not recommending any specific action. However, this is a case where we can take instruction from the leftists who refuse to invest in companies that trade with South Africa or pollute the environment. My advice is to spend your money exactly as if you are voting. If you do not like a company's corporate policies, then why in God's name are you subsidizing what you believe to be evil? Because of the Georgia flag controversy, I have forbidden my children to drink Coca-Cola, and since Pepsi is even more disgusting than Coke, they drink root beer, preferably not one of the national brands, because if men and women really believe in restoring local community, they ought to begin by shopping with their neighbors instead of with the national chains whose business it is to drive their neighbors into bankruptcy.

Back in McClellanville, we tried to buy the better part of our groceries from Bob Graham's store, even though there were lower prices and a much better selection 25 miles away in either direction. What will you do in a storm, I used to ask my neighbors, if Bob Graham is forced to shut down, and where will you go at the last minute? Does the A & P or Piggly Wiggly give you credit, like Mr. Bob, who only once, when I was four months late, wrote on my monthly bill, "Could you give me a little help on this?"

I have heard all the arguments why WAL-MART is a good

neighbor to small towns and how we all come out ahead in a free market with open competition based on price. But I have also seen how these things operate with my own eyes. A mile from my house there is a small shopping center, which used to have both a small, locally owned supermarket and a local pharmacy. When a large national chain decided to open up a super drugstore, it not only took the place of the only supermarket in my neighborhood where I could buy wine, but it also insisted that the shopping center terminate the lease on the old drugstore. To this day, my wife and I try to buy medicine anywhere but from that super drugstore or one of its thousands of sister stores all across the country.

One of the problems with cities like Rockford is not that they are provincial but that they are not provincial enough. The lack of parochial commitments seems to drain community of its life and reduce Main Street America to strip malls and fast-food chains. All good places, whether Paris, France, or Paris, Kentucky, are particular and peculiar, and it does not matter so much whether the local cuisine is crepes or chicken-fried steak, because if it is local, it is bound to be better than any portion-control servings trucked into Chi-Chi's.

Chesterton and his distributist friends used to tell people to go only to the little shops and to avoid the big stores in downtown London. This policy was due in part to their concern for local community, but it also reflected their conviction that small, specialized shops—greengrocers and butchers and apothecaries—are more human than department stores and supermarkets. In much of Europe, life is still carried out on the human scale, and if we wish to humanize life here in America and make it safe for our faiths, then we must regard every dollar we spend as an investment in our vision of heaven or hell. There is a stupid joke about the man who crossed a parrot with a lion. "What did you get?" asks a stranger. "I don't know, but when he talks, I listen." In a commercial society, like Carthage or the United States, money talks, and it talks so loud that it drowns out all the voices of faith and music and love as it parrots endlessly its litany of "the real thing" and "the choice of a new generation." We must learn to make our money speak our own language. We must learn to make it roar.

©

LIBERAL ARTS

NEW WORLD ARMY, NEW WORLD BATTLES

From the July 12 *Bulletin* of the Equal Employment/Equal Opportunity Office of the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command in North Chicago, Illinois:

II. EEO/EO Case Analysis.

Complainant's Position: Complainant alleges she was sexually harassed when: The 1SGT asked her out on several occasions and asked to visit her at her house . . .

Findings: . . . no sexual harassment. However, a conflict of leadership styles did exist.

Analysis: Improve communications by conducting awareness sessions on leadership styles . . .

III. Calendar of Observances.

August 26, 1994. Women's Equality Day.

September 15-October 15, 1994. National Hispanic Heritage Month.

October 1994. National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

November 1994. National American Indian Heritage Month.

Simon Says

by Thomas Fleming

Oratorio San Giovanni
Urbino, Good Friday 1994

You ask me who I am or what I was,
this boy cocking his leg to check a toe
for thorns, painted in plaster, oblivious
to nature-boy who's read too much Thoreau

ducking a stranger in the stream; the bird
fluttering down on cue to scare the hicks;
hysterical women swearing that they'd heard
the thunder speak—all necromancer's tricks.

I grew up fast and saw this pious fraud
bragging he'd build the temple in one day—
our Yiddish Caesar, a real living god.
When the cops grabbed my coat, I got away

buck naked. Later on I heard his pal
deny he'd ever seen him in his life—
smart move for once, it kept him out of jail.
This was the wise guy who had pulled the knife.

That's all they had on this god, one slashed ear
and a few miracles. He should have tried
to cut a deal and poof poof disappear:
illusions by themselves don't get you fried.

He'd come to feed the poor and free the Jews!
Kingdoms not of this earth, what earthly good
are they? Why not Barrabas? Who would choose
a suffering servant over Robin Hood?

"Elijah, Elijah," he's screaming. Get the hook,
show's over. It's still a treat to hear him rave,
though someone says he cribbed it from a book.
He'd save the world, himself he cannot save.

Thomas, of all the Twelve, the only one
I trusted, never liked to talk of souls;
skeptical of the resurrection,
he had to stick his fingers in the holes,

just to find out—a real Jew on Christmas.
The hypocrites played dumb, refused to share
the big finish we called the Lazarus.
I could have been god too if they'd played fair.

Now I'm in business for myself: my act—
"the Power of God Called Great assisted by
the brain divine." Long legs and short skirts packed
them in, the best woman money can buy.

Some days I wish I had not learned to mock,
but in my face I see those cold blue feet
sticking twin tongues out of the sneering rock,
the racked flesh impudent beneath the sheet.

In this world slaughter-house of here and now,
what man who could be god would not be king?
In that darkness there is no golden bough,
no blood to vocalize the gibbering

ghosts—but there are no ghosts, there is no pain,
no darkness since there is no light.
For your whole life you're being sucked down that drain,
leaving behind a bad smell. Let's get tight:

It's all a mockery, a bloody sham;
the marks—God bless 'em—never do get wise.
He went off bleating Hebrew like a lamb
that licks the schochet's hand before it dies.

The universe is empty, and the gods
abandon us to our inanities.
It's a crap-shoot, with crooked dice and odds
that always pay the house. Faith? A striptease

never going all the way—look, don't touch.
Nothing but mind-sex on a world burnt out.
Go breed like rabbits in a hutch:
This death is all your life is all about.

Episcopal Follies

by Philip Jenkins



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

We have heard many debates recently about the undermining of moral and cultural traditions in contemporary America, a trend sometimes epitomized by the phrase “political correctness.” Conservatives often issue dark warnings about the ills that befall a society that cuts itself off from its roots, though few go so far as to predict total destruction, which is what might well overtake some institutions in which the process of decay has advanced most rapidly. I am specifically referring to those churches which used to represent the moderate mainstream of American religion and which since the 1960’s have generally been in the vanguard of every major radical and liberal movement of social reform, from civil rights and feminism to gay rights, pacifism, and ecology. Activism and even militancy may have been justified, but the various causes have so overwhelmed the fundamental religious mission of the churches that all the traditional denominations have declined precipitously, to an extent that is stunning to an outsider.

This has been true of all the various “mainstream” Protestant groups, including Methodists, American Baptists, and the United Church of Christ, but most illustrative of this trend is the Episcopal Church, which enjoys a political and cultural influence far beyond its official numbers. For example, though its membership has never amounted to more than one or two percent of the American population, the denomination usually claims the allegiance of up to a fifth of all United States senators, a figure equivalent to the number of Roman Catholics in the Senate. For this reason alone, what happens to the Epis-

copal Church is significant for how it affects the leadership of this nation; but it also epitomizes far wider trends.

And what has happened to the Episcopal Church has been little short of a catastrophe. Between 1966 and 1989, the baptized membership of the church fell from 3.6 million to 2.4 million, a rate that, if extrapolated, means the literal extinction of the denomination before the year 2020. Nor is this rate unusual when placed alongside the fate of other “mainstream” groups, which are fast becoming anything but that.

It is possible to find nonpolitical reasons for this decline, for example in demographic changes, and it is true that church membership has fluctuated greatly throughout American history. On the other hand, the decline has not affected some other denominations, usually fundamentalist, and the membership of the (Pentecostal) Assemblies of God has in a very few years raced ahead of that of the Episcopalians. The Episcopal Church has hastened its demise by a series of violent conflicts over political and moral issues, most of which revolve around such familiar themes as the definition of authority, the importance of tradition, and the nature of sexuality. In the 1970’s, the church lost many conservatives through far-reaching revisions of its prayer-book; the new 1979 version abandoned much of the linguistic power of its 1928 predecessor. Still more divisive was the question of women’s ordination to the Episcopal priesthood, in flat contradiction of scriptural injunction and two millennia of consistent tradition. Women’s ordination to the priesthood began in 1976, and in 1989 Barbara Harris was ordained suffragan bishop of Massachusetts. In the 1970’s, the church provided funds to various politically militant groups under the guise of “empowering minorities” and failed to curb or even reprimand the floridly heretical specula-

Philip Jenkins is a professor of religious studies and history at Pennsylvania State University and author of Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide (1994).

tions of some of its clergy. Not surprisingly, many Episcopalians abandoned the church, usually feeling that it had abandoned them.

The chaos of the 1970's was understandable in the context of the political upsurges of these years, particularly the churches' weary quest to become "relevant"; but whatever the causes, this was a decade that most Episcopalians should have been glad to see end. What is baffling is that the church did not take the opportunity to retrench and recover after this turbulence, and throughout the 1980's there was a steady slide in the directions advocated by the most radical. While the rate of decline in membership has slowed somewhat in the last five years, this is no cause for optimism. All this means is that the ceaseless hemorrhage of traditional Episcopalians is being counteracted by an influx of refugees from other churches, who believe that bad as it is, the Episcopal Church cannot be quite as bad as their former institutions. Today, some 60 percent of Episcopalian Church members were raised in other Christian traditions. It remains to be seen how long such refugees from other torn denominations can continue to staunch the flow.

What can be so bad about this church? The central issue is authority, or the lack thereof. Though the church has a traditional Episcopal hierarchy, it has become all but impossible to find a view or practice so bizarre, heretical, or outrageous as to attract a critical word from a superior, still less a disciplinary measure. Perhaps the best known Episcopal cleric today is John Spong, bishop of Newark, whose best-selling books have variously denounced the doctrines of the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and the bodily Resurrection of Christ, all in the name of "rescuing the Bible from fundamentalism." "Fundamentalism" in this context means *any* belief in the historicity of most aspects of the Christian story.

Spong is especially radical on such matters as the women's role in the church and the ordination of homosexuals. A scandal arose in 1989 when Spong contradicted explicit teaching by ordaining a practicing homosexual (one church newspaper reported this moment with the memorable image "Spong lays hands suddenly on homosexual"). Apart from the illegality of this decision, the chosen candidate was thoroughly lacking in charity or diplomacy, as indicated when he suggested publicly that Mother Teresa would have been a better person if she had sexual intercourse (though his actual language was far more vulgar and explicit). Spong has explained the biblical injunctions against homosexuality by declaring that St. Paul himself was "gay" (though in most uses of the word, a less "gay" person than Paul is difficult to imagine). Spong has also denounced the alleged ill treatment of women by the "male-dominated" Roman Catholic Church, and his attacks have often ventured into the realm of strident anti-Catholicism. This singularly unecumenical position is in fact quite common among the radical and feminist wing of the Episcopal Church.

None of these actions has attracted the slightest censure or reprimand, and the lack of disciplinary framework has contributed to the intellectual anarchy within the church that passes under the guise of "spiritual freedom." In 1991, the bishop of Washington, D.C., ordained a noncelibate lesbian to the priesthood. Why should he not have? Spong had faced no sanction.

Anyone who believes that the universities are the purest bastions of "political correctness" should venture into that national theological circus called the General Convention of

the Episcopal Church, held triennially. The Phoenix gathering of 1991 featured a systematic assault on the notion of ordained priesthood in the form of "eucharistic circles" passing around the bread and wine, so that no one individual could claim a special elite authority to consecrate. Other notable elements included a fulsome apology to Iraq and its government for trouncing its armed forces in the Gulf War. The Episcopal Church is firmly antimilitarist, except when the latest media fad dictates the use of force. With the rest of the National Council of Churches, Episcopalians now demand military intervention against Serb forces in Bosnia, an act of stupidity that fortunately has not yet come to pass.

Connoisseurs of political faddery avidly awaited the 1994 convention, held at Indianapolis in August; they were not disappointed. How could they be when featured speakers included Hillary Clinton's personal guru Marian Wright Edelman? High points of the debates included passionate advocacy of ecclesiastical blessing of homosexual relationships and the customary circus of "feminist spirituality." However, the central event was the plenary session on "Overcoming Sexism," clearly the primary issue for any objective observer of the contemporary world scene or the modern spiritual malaise.

Both the Phoenix and Indianapolis conventions were most notable for their demonstration of the utter obsession of the mainline church with matters of gender and sexual preference. This especially manifests itself in the battle over "gender-neutral" or "inclusive" language in liturgy or biblical translation, where the changes demanded by feminists have long ventured far outside any concepts of traditional Christianity. The use of "God the Father" or "God the Son" are obvious patriarchal abominations, but so is "Jesus," because this form demands a male pronoun. "The Eternal Word" is an acceptable circumlocution. "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" is as unacceptable in many churches as racist jokes would be in the mass media. This taste for the nonspecific and neutral also helps to dilute orthodox assertions of faith and to expand the overlap with generic New Age doctrines and thought. Another fashion involves extolling feminine biblical imagery, a concept that may sound harmless until we see examples like the proposed liturgy declaring that "through Her [Wisdom] you formed the human race." By this point, we have moved close to the goddess worship of both the New Age and the Woman-Church movement.

Linguistic and liturgical radicalism have affected the whole range of doctrine, with particular impact on the concepts of sin and atonement. In the radical perspective, the church should be teaching pride and empowerment to the oppressed, and guilt and sin are "patriarchal" baggage to be discarded. The Atonement has even been described as the "ultimate in child abuse," committed by God the Father against His Son. And how is it possible or justifiable to seek the conversion of a non-Christian if these outsiders are already privy to a truth at least equally valid as Christianity? Episcopalians in the Pacific Northwest participated in a general apology to the Indian communities of the region for having dared to evangelize them in previous centuries. In 1992, the denomination took the lead in the ritual denunciations of the Columbus quincentennial.

Feminist influence is also manifest in the recent campaigns over "clergy sexual abuse," a term that in the Episcopalian context generally does not mean the molestation of children by clergy but sexual associations between ministers and consenting adult women. This specific form of "abuse" has been the

subject of enormous attention in the Episcopal press in the last three years, as it serves to discredit the idea of an ordained (and still predominantly male) ministry. It also supports the view that the church exploits and oppresses women, whose position must be reformed through theological and doctrinal change.

None of these views, however outré or apparently unacceptable, will draw the slightest complaint from the church's hierarchy, because virtually anything goes and because the radical and feminist activists have so firmly established themselves in the leadership. To anyone who wonders what the Episcopal Church stands for, the answer in the 1990's is "almost anything."

In fairness, though, not all views are beyond criticism. There remain a handful of doctrines and practices that still attract the ire of the mainline (that is, liberal) Episcopal hierarchy and its publications, which sometimes feature headlines complaining "Episcopal Authority Defied in Virginia!"—a recent banner from *Episcopal Life*. However, the subversives and dissidents stigmatized are invariably conservatives or traditionalists, those ignorant obscurantists who obey what the church has said and practiced over the last few centuries. These malignants go so far as to refuse to ordain women or to recognize such ordinations, and the columns of the Episcopal press regularly denounce the misplaced tolerance that permits the survival of such gross heresy. If they do not like the church's rules, let them go elsewhere! The conservative Episcopal Syn-

od of America occupies a place in liberal demonology comparable to that of the "Liquor Interest" in Baptist sermons of a previous generation.

All of which raises the fundamental problem of numbers. Reading the Episcopal press suggests that the average church member is a strong feminist, believes in homosexual marriage, and wants the church to direct its primary efforts to fighting racism and saving the environment. Unfortunately, the pews are full of unenlightened individuals with more traditionally defined religious concerns. In 1991, a poll by *The Living Church* found overwhelming (80-90 percent) opposition among practicing Episcopalians to most aspects of the radical agenda, especially to ordaining noncelibate homosexuals or to consecrating homosexual marriages.

The further the leadership pushes, the more it is likely to encourage desertions that will hasten the collapse begun in the 1960's. *Trahison des clercs*, indeed. Within two decades, the Episcopal Church is likely to be an ideologically impeccable group devoted to whatever progressive causes happen to be major fads at the time. It may also have a membership about equal to that of the Amish, and with as much influence on secular affairs. Unless matters change very soon, a once-great American church will become a fringe sect, vulnerable to endless schisms over niceties of political orthodoxy. The worst thing is that many of the activists causing this disaster would probably applaud this drift to sectarian irrelevance.



Progress

by Peter Russell

Venice,
24th November 1965

Walk at large into the great sea
Where the dolphin leaps and the sea-pig plays on the tide,
Where the still moon at midnight lights a myriad steps
Azure and jet and phosphorescent up to the sky,
And the weightless sandolo glides silent all night . . .

Romantic image of lovers drifting alone
Thrown back in the sea like a poisonous fish

While the Poet goes on his endless alarming journey
Moonbeam by moonbeam sphere by concentric sphere
Into the cosmic rain of the infinite mind

Leaving behind the drag of atomic reactors
And the lame excursus of mathematics

Building a model of all elliptical space
House by house in the hollow cave of his head

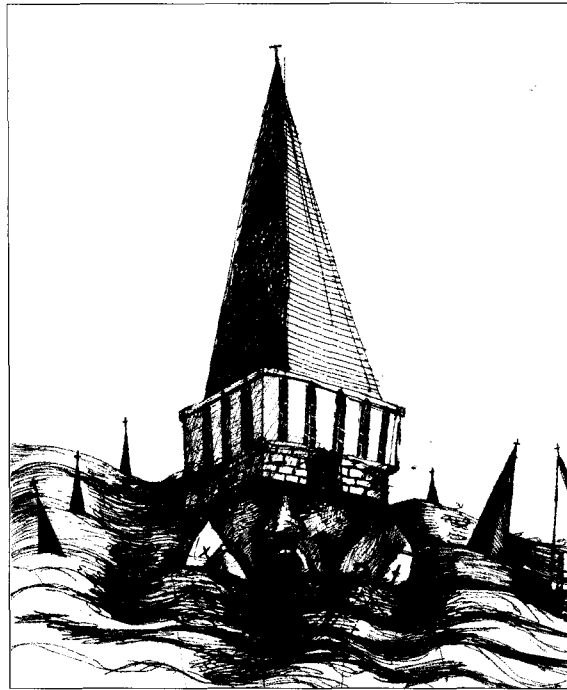
Like a young rhetor learning a maiden speech
Like an old philosopher visiting scenes of his youth

For the last time before the guards come in
And the cruel rope is stretched round Boethius' head.

Justice and Its Harvesters

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops

by Thomas Molnar



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Nobody, except the *New York Times* and its worldwide allies, questions the right and duty of Catholic bishops to raise their public voice on moral issues, and on social issues intertwined with problems of a moral nature. Admittedly, pastoral letters, *monita*, even encyclicals sound rather hollow today, like trumpets in the desert, laments in a cultural vacuum. After all, democracy means that everybody speaks in a continuous stream; one voice is hardly heard above another; the din of a new Broadway musical battles the word of Christ half a mile away at St. Patrick's.

Let us note, too, that the marginal position and hence diminished responsibility of the Church and its hierarchy has had a blunting effect on the intellectual acuity of the Church's spokesmen. In *The Challenge of Peace* ten years ago, American bishops instructed citizens in "passive resistance" to the invading Soviet hordes. Their fellow bishops in Eastern Europe could have told them that, upon meeting the first "passive resister," the Soviet soldier would have shot him dead (with 20 others) and then nailed his photograph on every street corner as a warning to the population.

Similar naiveté would have been unimaginable at times when the Church possessed political power—of her own and as part of state power, both resting on the wide and solid faith of collectivities. Those times are gone, first with Jefferson's and Robespierre's "wall of separation," then with the deep secularization of all aspects of life. The Second Vatican Council merely put the seal on the invisible but *de facto* social contract

signed in 1776 and 1789 between a victorious civil society and the Church it had reduced to lobby status.

It is a normal, but in this case very questionably motivated, human impulse on the part of the Catholic hierarchy to seek secular shelters in the raging storms of a hostile, post-Christian world. Yet this is the actual state of things. Instead of referring, as in the past, to the Church's association with the throne (from the Pharaoh to the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs), the bishops today invoke new potentates in flattering terms: the United Nations, the Common Market, NATO, and "global democracy" (which is a usable term for political football in the United States but is out of place under the pen of spiritual leaders). Besides, while popes and bishops used to castigate emperors and kings (St. Ambrose, Gregory VII, Thomas Becket), pastoral letters and the "Reflections" of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops give unquestioned allegiance to the all-too-human international agencies and bureaucratic gatherings. Morally, the latter deserve little of the trust that the American bishops seem to place in them. I have often walked in the footsteps of United Nations troops "intervening for peace" and seen pillage, rape, and injustice. In the ex-Belgian Congo, Indian U.N. soldiers were feared like the plague; 30 years later, Russian U.N. troopers return to Bosnia after demobilization to continue ravaging land and population. Meanwhile, active Blue Berets, stationed in the Balkans, deal in drugs.

The same is true for the bishops of Europe. True, they would not believe that "Bolshevik troops respect noncooperation"—Soviet soldiers shot to death Bishop Vilmos Apor of Győr in 1945 when he tried to protect 50 women from rape—

Thomas Molnar's latest book is *The Emerging Atlantic Culture* (Transaction).

but they, too, follow the fashion of approving “global interventionism.” They did so during the three centuries of the Crusades, although they try to forget this. To be liberated *then* were the True Cross, the Holy Land, and Christians living under Muslim rule. In the perspective of the year 1087, this was just as essential and urgent as putting Mr. Aristide back in his presidential palace seems now. The Holy Roman Emperor and the kings of France and England were then the chief crusaders; “the U.N. will be at the center of the new international order,” write the American bishops, in *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace*. In other words, back to the Crusades with General Schwarzkopf instead of Richard the Lionhearted, with bombers instead of arrows.

Never before, even when it was persecuted by Caesar, did the Church occupy such an ambiguous position as in our century. The “contract” the Church signed in several stages (separation from the state; alienation of the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, and the proletariat; acceptance of desacralization; finally, Vatican II) with the new hegemonic power, liberalism, has compelled it to surrender power over morals and culture. In morals, the Church’s voice is not more influential than that of the sects or industrial interests; in culture, we see no artistic, architectural, or musical style inspired by a sense of the sacred. On the contrary, liturgy has itself been cleansed of Latin and elements of veneration; the neutral and the ugly dominate words and gestures. It was expected that the faith would instantly reflower in ex-communist lands. True, Boris Yeltsin is flanked today by the Patriarch of Moscow; old churches and monasteries are restored; divine service in them comes to life. However, in the race between a newly resuscitated religion and the invading Western lifestyle, the latter seems to win. We can only laugh at Jacques Maritain’s prediction (1951): “When people will have the common will to live together in a world-society, they will want to project a common task. What task? That of conquering liberty.”

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The reaction of Eastern Europe’s churchmen is varied. Their reflexes, shaped by 40 years of fear and treachery, are terribly strong but increasingly matched, although in a diffuse form, by a new fear of the devastating Western influence. Under communism, there were small protective shells: family,

friendship, circles of study and music. Now drugs, sex, crime, hunger for wealth and luxury undo those ties. In this ocean of filth the Church in Eastern Europe also loses its moorings. What the Communist Party apparatus with its “peace-priests” was unable to achieve is today accomplished by new conflicts between traditionalists and adepts of Vatican II, between liberals and conservatives, between “modernizing” priests forever dissatisfied with the “old structure” and Rome’s careful policy of not rocking the boat.

Political, even ideological alliances are inevitable in Eastern Europe under the circumstances, and they are not basically different from those that the Church feels obliged to make in the West. In the West, the Church has had its right and left wings, and the controversy is still not settled. In Eastern Europe, the *left*, at least communism so named, is not yet respectable-sounding, while *right* denotes fascism (this is what Communist Party propaganda had pounded into the man-in-the-street), an even less acceptable label. Caught in the web of a constantly rewritten history, the Church has chosen a cautiously liberal-socialistic path that paints gray on gray, blocks people’s desire to identify themselves with “Rome,” and assimilates the Church to the churches of Western Europe, all singing the praises of the Common Market, United Europe, and the United Nations. If *The Harvest of Justice* is a middle-of-the-road document, so are the pastoral letters of most Eastern European bishops.

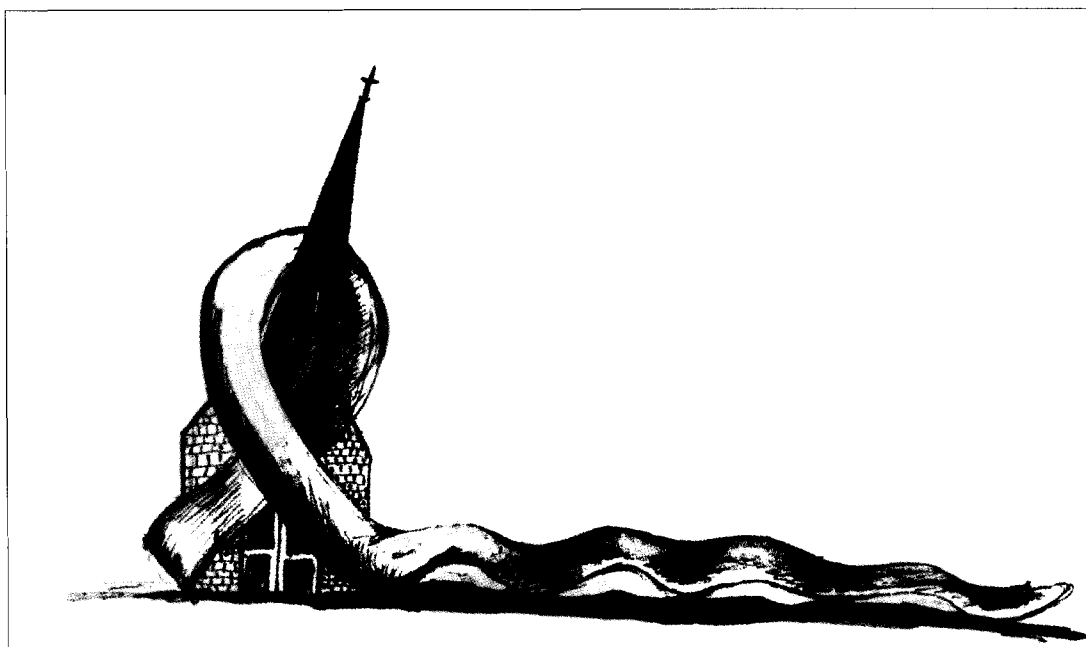
With one difference. The nations of Eastern Europe have not yet been broken on the wheel of material, democratic, and pluralist progress. It is one thing to yearn for consumer goods when bread and milk cost more every week and one’s telephone is usually out of order, another to consent to the nation’s degradation and humiliation. Soviet occupation did not mean these things, since Russia is regarded as the plague: it kills, it does not degrade. But to be an old Catholic nation, and one run by freemasons, cosmopolite parliamentarians, and the media-mob, to be threatened by century-old enemies at one’s borders—this is intolerable. The Church, mealy-mouthed on these issues, would only create antagonism. Thus the Eastern European Church seems to have chosen. Its words and gestures are liberal, democratic, pluralist, as are some members of the clergy, but when it comes, for example, to reclaiming schools confiscated by the party-state, the bishops know well how to secure their due. The same is true of the religious rights of minorities, such as those of Magyars in Transylvania.

All in all, the separation of church and state has settled nothing, historically. If it is true that the former used to be excessively tied to the latter (was the reverse not true also?), it is equally true that little progress has been made since: today, churches are subordinated to liberal civil society, its public opinion and ruling ideologies. A document like *The Harvest of Justice* reads like a United Nations bulletin when speeches have been delivered by all 184 members. What the bishops omit in their liberal enthusiasm is that today’s clear and present danger is not the situation in Bosnia or Haiti—that kind of threat to an area will always be in generous supply—but *one-worldism*, one clique speaking like Big Brother in the name of humanity, humanitarianism, and humanitarian intervention. The Church ought to know better: in past centuries it never succeeded in uniting even pockets of Christian Europe. Why would the United Nations, the Europe concocted at Brussels, NATO, or some other acronymic organization save the world, bring peace, and harvest justice?

The New Scapular

AIDS and the Wrath of God

by John Patrick Zmirak



When I was in Catholic high school, some 15 years ago, even as the last of the marble altars were being pulled out of America's churches, the ornate wooden confessionals uprooted in favor of plywood-and-plexiglass "reconciliation rooms," one devotional custom persisted from centuries before, in the undershirts and blouses of the Vinnics, Patricks, and Marias at Mater Christi High School in Astoria, Queens: the wearing of the scapular. Perhaps because of its simplicity, because of its deep roots in the culture, in the example of grandfather and older sister and Mama, or maybe thanks to rank superstition, this devotion seemed likely to survive the iconoclastic frenzy unleashed by Vatican II. Consisting of two square pieces of brown rough cloth linked by a string, the scapular bears an image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and carries a promise that he who wears it faithfully will die in a state of grace—that Our Lady will intervene and place him if not in Heaven, at least on the bottom rung of Purgatory, which is about as high as most Catholic teenagers back then were aiming.

Of course, this promise was hedged about with all sorts of theological restrictions, warnings from dusty French theologians about "presuming on God's mercy" and "the need for a penitential life"—but none of these were heeded by us feckless,

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fantastical teenagers. We knew a loophole when we saw one. So in those months when we were unwilling to crawl into the "reconciliation room" and repent of the dreary list of impurities, blasphemies, intemperance, gluttony, and rebellion that described most of our waking hours, we were careful to put on our scapulars—especially before climbing in a Pinto behind a drunken driver.

Things are different now. I do not know whether the kids I ran around with in high school are still wearing their scapulars, or whether any of them frequent the "reconciliation rooms" anymore. They were surely married in church, and a good number of them probably still make it to Mass each week. If they conform to statistics, half of them have done their duty and divorced. Of these, the most devout are filing for annulments. This last group is the most likely still to be wearing scapulars. But perhaps the custom is dying out after all. When I pass my old high school—since renamed and repopulated—I see more gang colors than little brown tags with Our Lady on them.

I spend much more time in Manhattan than in Astoria, now. It is there that I see another curious religious custom, which seems to have arisen to replace the scapular, although it has taken root among a different sort of people. I am talking, of course, about the little red AIDS ribbon, which adorns the lapels (often in enameled, 18-karat form) of America's artistic/managerial class, the well-intentioned liberals who mug for us and mug us. (Try to spot someone at the Tonys or the Os-

cars without one.) So commonplace has the ribbon become that the very gay activists who endorsed it have begun denouncing it as "meaningless." (The last straw was the home-ly model who had the ribbon tattooed over and over, all the way down her spine—perhaps an attempt to endear herself to designers. It worked.)

This presents a problem for me, too, this "devaluation" of the AIDS ribbon. You see, I thought it was virtually meaningless all along, even when only a select few choreographers, museum donors, and fag-hags were sporting the little doodad. What exactly *did* it mean to declare that you were *against* a deadly disease? Did it imply that everyone else—unribboned, perhaps scapularied—was for it? Did the ribbon signify that you had a special concern for the health and well-being of well-off, promiscuous homosexuals—over against the health of Vinnies, Patricks, and Marias? Or did it mean (as I suspect) that you wanted everyone who saw you to know that you were sympathetic to the plight of one of the most influential, tightly knit, and well-funded social groups in America—that you were both socially conscious and socially connected, perhaps by close acquaintance to some Pulitzer-winning playwright who was even then languishing in Maui?

Now, with the universalization of the ribbon—I see it even in Astoria, where there are 102 video rental shops and no book-stores—it has indeed lost this primary meaning, this social cachet it used to carry. There is nothing bohemian about AIDS now; plenty of skanky hetero drug addicts have caught it, and its rate of spread has slowed among homosexuals, many of whom wised up just in time. The AIDS movement has found its Leni Riefenstahl in Jonathan Demme, whose brilliantly manipulative *Philadelphia* taught the masses how to weep on

command. AIDS compassion is fast becoming a populist sentiment.

No longer must the "gay" movement worry about its constituency being "scapegoated" for the arcane African disease that they made an epidemic, spreading it to millions through a wave of promiscuity almost unprecedented in human history. (I refer to the 70's, the "golden age" of random, impersonal restroom sex still celebrated by such writers as the nostalgic Edmund White.) Mention of these dirty facts is deemed uncompassionate and forbidden. By now, the existence of AIDS has become a positive political benefit, a marketing edge, for the "gay" movement. Unable to get techniques of sodomy taught in ordinary classrooms as "sex education," "moderate" groups such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis teach these activities to 12-year-olds in public schools in suburban New Jersey under the rubric of "AIDS avoidance." (Perhaps the next step is to invite drunk drivers convicted of vehicular manslaughter to teach Driver's Ed: "And here's how to accelerate without spilling your drink . . .")

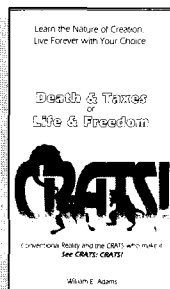
Besides breaking down residual squeamishness about sexual perversions, the phenomenon of AIDS has done for queer activists what Bull Connor and his attack dog did for the civil rights movement—turned them from apparent aggressors into apparent victims. And there is nothing Americans love more than victims, those sweet little substitute Christs. When we look at weak, fading celebrities such as Rock Hudson and Liberace, we forget all, seeing only wasted cherubs whose sins have been washed in their own blood, sacrificial lambs who have suffered passion and died, spiritualized martyrs for carnal love. AIDS is no longer an issue of sexual politics or even public health. It is an extension of popular religion.

This fact has been noted by the most radical queer activists, the jackbooted members of ACT-UP, who singled out conservative Christians (especially Catholics) for attack. Assembling outside churches, disrupting Masses, showering newly ordained priests and their aged family members with condoms, stealing communion Hosts and trampling them into dust, the "gay" mobs accused mildly orthodox cardinals such as Bernard Law and John O'Connor of "murder" for their unwillingness to grant religious approval to sodomy and dispense condoms to junior high school students. Waving enormous signs that said "Stop the Church," they stormed the gates of cathedral and parish nationwide—never troubling the gay bathhouses and porn parlors where the disease was in fact being spread.

Irrational, you say? Nonsense. These activists knew exactly what they were doing, just as St. Boniface did when he cut down the sacred groves of the Germans. They realized on some level that their cause is not sexual but religious; they are the partisans of a new faith—a kind of infertility cult—which centers on the "sacred" mysteries of sexual initiation. Whenever its Genesis occurred (perhaps with Margaret Sanger and Havelock Ellis), this cult found its Exodus at Stonewall, its Promised Land in the 70's, its Golgotha and Easter with the onset of AIDS. The movement we are witnessing now, with the elevation of AIDS to a sacred form of suffering and sign of conquest, the little red ribbons scattering everywhere like so many tongues of fire, is the new religion's Pentecost.

Now perhaps all of this is a natural development, the final unfolding of the poisonous logic of romantic love as diagnosed by Denis de Rougemont, the last revenge of Sodom and Gomorrah on a culture that embraced Tristan and Isolde as ex-

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emplars. Perhaps we should not be surprised that the residual Christianity of America has been effeminated and nutrasweetened until it is everything Nietzsche railed against and worse, in Walker Percy's words "a fornication of spirit." It may very well be that the "last man" has arrived, when a culture that used to launch Crusades kneels before the figures of dying promiscuous perverts—not in simple compassion, but in active admiration.

But a Christian is forbidden to think so. We must find meaning even in the debasement of our society, Providential purpose in the sufferings that we and others endure—for we believe not in a blind organic mechanism of history that grinds higher values into dust, but in Christ the King, Lord of History, Who is with us even today. We must reflect, with all due humility, on the profound meaning of AIDS in light of the truths of faith and reason and search for its place in the deep things of God.

What are we, then, to make of the AIDS epidemic? What, if any, religious meaning can we derive from the grim spectacle of an incurable, horrific disease—really, in a sense, the ultimate disease, since it cancels one's resistance to every sort of infection—with which hundreds of thousands of people are infecting themselves and each other, almost exclusively through behavior that is against God's will and the natural law? Remember, AIDS is not primarily spread by making love to your spouse, going to the dentist, getting a blood transfusion, or even playing with green monkeys. Every activity that typically transmits this disease—drug abuse, sodomy, and promiscuous fornication—is an act of rebellion against God and His created order. But so is every sin; that is the very definition of sin. And every one of us is a sinner—so why are we not all afflicted with a plague like AIDS?

But, of course, we are. How many 200-year-old men do you know? Ah, they were plague victims, all. And where will you be in a hundred years? Dead, of course. Each one of us is afflicted with a drawn-out version of AIDS, which operates over 70 years rather than 10, but which nevertheless afflicts our every muscle, bone, taste bud, and brain cell with irreversible decay, weakening our immunity to diseases and reducing us finally to helpless wraiths at the mercy of doctors and nurses who are ever more eager for euthanasia to empty our expensive bed for the next patient.

This plague—death—is the result of sin, we are taught. The original sin of Eve and Adam brought the bitterness of death to our frame, whose effects not even the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ could undo. Even baptized souls, full of sanctifying grace and reconciled with God, must suffer the bitterness of aging and the pains of death, under the long shadow of that tree in Eden. Some of them must hang from it as martyrs, earning the sweetness of heaven with the tears of suffering. No earthly scene, however innocent and joyful, is free of the taint of our common curse. What is more touching than the sight of a six-year-old girl kneeling to receive her first Holy Communion? How easy it is to forget that the Bread of Life that she consumes is the Body and Blood of Jesus, confectioned by a priest in a sacrificial rite that reenacts His violent death on Calvary. The sacrament's very efficacy grows from tragedy, as every blessing flows from Christ's wounded side.

So if we go so far as to say that AIDS is a plague sent by God to punish sin, we are not singling anyone out. We would mean only that the general curse of death is applied a little more quickly in certain cases, as a divine response to particular sorts

of sin. Is there biblical precedent for that? There is plenty. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 (wherein two entire cities are destroyed because of their inhabitants' aggressive homosexual behavior) is only the most hackneyed example. The Old Testament is full of similar incidents, where the enemies of Israel are afflicted—sometimes innocent and guilty alike. Of course, "innocence" is always a relative term for men; still we may ask, what did the first-born children of Egypt ever do to Moses?

Nor is that method of divine instruction limited to the Old Covenant: Christ promises worldwide tribulation in Matthew 24 and elsewhere, while the Apocalypse is one extended prophecy of the destruction of the earth in retribution for sin that must precede His Second Coming and the Last Judgment. In apparitions from La Sallette to Fátima, Catholics believe that Our Lady predicted untold temporal suffering for the nations if the world failed to repent. We have since reaped the whirlwind she warned us against—the horrors of this century, from World War I to the slaughters and pogroms that stained all Europe with innocent blood. It seems the price of sin is still death.

Clearly, no orthodox believer—that is, no Catholic, and no Protestant or Jew who takes Holy Scripture as the Word of God, rather than a mere soccer ball for archaeologists and religious studies professors—can deny that temporal punishments have been a part of divine Providence. Records of them exist in the Old Testament, and abundant warnings about them occur in the New. There is a clear connection established between the commission of grave sins against the divine and natural laws and sudden temporal punishment. There is precedent both for individual condemnation (Onan) and for collective punishment (Sodom in the Old Testament, Babylon in the New).

Moreover, there seems to be a special connection between two particular kinds of sin and the direct expression of God's wrath. The first sort of sin is idolatry, frequently characterized as a type of adultery ("whoring after strange gods"). The second sort is sins of the flesh, especially perversions. These are most concisely catalogued by St. Paul in I Corinthians 6:9: "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [i.e., sodomites] . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." If that sounds like a sociological taxonomy of Western society today, my apologies for everyone's peace of mind. (Get out your scapulars, folks, and head for those "reconciliation rooms.")

But that is precisely the point, is it not? That our situation might be very grave indeed, that we may have wandered so far from God's laws—and nature's—that we can barely distinguish right from wrong. Only a violent reassertion of the laws of reality can revive our dreary consciousness to the fact that we are bodies living in a world with rules of its own that derive not from our wishful thinking but from God's will acting upon fallen nature. We do not create our own universes merely by the way we think about them. Any New Ager who really believes that is welcome to stand in front of my '78 Nova while I am behind the wheel and *think* my car out of existence. It will be a scientific experiment—Galileo would approve.

Only by hitting us with a car, by drawing in huge strokes and loud noises for the half-blind and near-deaf (to quote Flannery O'Connor), can the God we have exiled force Himself upon our attention. In a society that cares only about results and the

bottom line, the only language in which He can speak to us is punishment and ruin. If all we care about is good sex, long life, and lots of money, then those are precisely the things He will deprive us of—in His mercy.

But why is God so especially outraged at those two special classes of sin—idolatry and impurity? At first glance, these may seem less important than, say, sins against justice (like theft and the exploitation of the poor) or against the sanctity of human life (like abortion or unjust warfare). These latter crimes have obvious social effects that damage the lives of other men. What is it about the special crimes I have pointed to that merits their temporal punishment?

With idolatry, the answer is simple: sin is simply and purely a rebellion against God, a denial of His sovereign rights to worship and obedience by the creatures whom He freely created out of nothing and whose very existence would wink out like a spark were He for one moment to disregard them. Idolatry is this sin in an especially pure form, a direct attack on the dignity of God as (to quote the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom) Commander of the Universe. It is an act of mutiny or treason—crimes which when committed against merely human institutions are punished with death. And justly. How much more justly may God dispense it to His creatures? Idolatry undermines one's understanding of the entire universe, toppling God from His throne and enshrining some created image or concept or philosophy that better suits human fashion. Such gods are rarely benign in their demands: Think of Carthage, where the goddess Tanit demanded the sacrifice of first-born infants, which were supplied by thousands of eager parents for hundreds of years. Or Mexico, where the Aztec gods required and received the hearts of thousands of men every year, ripped beating from their living breasts.

God's punishment fell heavy on both nations—in the form of Roman legions and Catholic conquistadors. Neither civilization survived, and no living trace of these idolatries exists today—except perhaps in the dark new feminist nature cults, which combine worship of the earth with a fervent embrace of abortion. One Episcopalian priestess, Carter Heyward, went so far as to suggest that abortion be made a sacrament in a new “women's religion.” This is not surprising; the old nature gods whom the Hebrew prophets condemned, like Ishtar and Baal, frequently demanded the sacrifice of unborn or newborn children.

So much for idolatry. What about impurity? What is it about sodomy, adultery, and the like which God considers so grave that He sends us plagues and afflictions to warn us about them and call us to repent of them? The case is parallel to idolatry; it is a sacred dignity that these sins attack—the dignity of man as the image of God and of baptized Christians as His adopted sons. One of the things that most sets man apart from the beasts is his ability to restrain his sexual passions with bonds of emotion, fidelity, social responsibility, and morality. This morality (which we can deduce rationally from looking at man's nature but which God offers to us complete in Revelation), sets us apart from the animals, many of which commit acts of incest, sodomy, rape, and cannibalism as a matter of course.

We are not horrified when dogs fornicate—it is what we expect of them. What baboons and chimps do with their hands—well, the sight can be funny or disgusting, depending on your sense of humor. Certainly no sane person is disappointed or appalled by the knowledge that simians masturbate

compulsively or that the males mount each other just to prove who is tougher. We demand no better of these beasts.

Conversely, when we look at humans the same way, and make no more demands on their self-restraint than we do of apes, we think less of them. By applying a bestial standard to men, we start to see men as beasts. This is obvious in the rhetoric of sex and AIDS educators who want condoms handed out in grammar schools: “Of course, abstinence is the best thing for children. But you can't rely on them to have self-control, so it makes sense to be safe.” In other words, human children are really no more than animals and it is senseless to try turning them into anything more. Our image of children has moved from an exaggerated Victorian innocence that denied Original Sin to a repulsive prurience that invites sexual abuse. After all, if these kids really are barely human sex machines just waiting to go into action, what is wrong with an adult having a little fun with one of them? Why should he be expected to control himself? This exact point is the message of Walker Percy's last novel, *The Thanatos Syndrome*. The sexual abuse of children may be the next taboo to go. (One gay group, the North American Man-Boy Love Association—NAMBLA—has adopted this as its sexual ideology, calling for “Sex before Eight or It's Too Late.” The more “mainstream” gay groups reject this position, requiring only that anal and oral sex be taught to first graders, not performed on them. Thank God for moderation.)

My point is not that homosexuals are child molesters: no doubt, few of them are. But the ideologies that grant their “lifestyles” public acceptance and advocacy also hammer at taboos—such as child molesting and incest—that some homosexuals would consider valid. The sexual urge is so powerful, and in the absence of grace so overwhelming, that only a harsh set of social mores—or a leviathan state—can keep it in check. We have abandoned the former and are rapidly slipping toward the latter.

My thesis—and it is simply the thesis of Christianity and Judaism before it—is that sex is not safe and love is not free, at least among human beings. Sex is both sacred and dangerous. It is the mode God chose for transmitting human life. It is the metaphor He uses (in the *Canticle of Canticles* and in *Ephesians 5*) to represent Christ's relationship with the Church and with each human soul. His Church considers sex such an important sign that renouncing it takes on a deep meaning for her, signifying a direct wedding of oneself to Christ here on earth—hence the rise of monasticism, a celibate clergy, and the special celebration of the sacred Virginity of Mary. Removing all controls from human sex organs debases the currency of human sexuality from the sacred bond of marriage, inextricably linked to procreation, to the level of a cheap thrill, a glandular drug with certain ugly side-effects (like diseases or children), all of which can be counteracted by latex, pill, and suction machine. Just keep it sterile, and keep it safe.

It is possible to deny my thesis, to assert that human beings cannot and should not be held to a different standard of sexual behavior from that of beasts. It is possible to construct other sexual codes, less demanding than the Christian one, based on pleasure, social usefulness, or eugenics. But it is not possible to believe and practice these systems, teach them to generations of children, and still hold onto the elevated notion of human nature that grew up in the Christian Church. One cannot nod at every form of sexual perversion and still hold onto

that traditional vision of man. That view of man was the source of ideas like individual rights, social justice, and the sanctity of human life. It is from the mouth of Christ—not Malthus or Darwin—that we hear the injunction to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and tend the sick. Shall we reject His authority on one occasion—sexual ethics—and invoke it on another? Some have tried, notably the liberal Protestants who inhabit both the National Council of Churches and the National Council of “Catholic” Bishops. These clerics, eager to please the unappeasable radicals in their ranks and the atheists who control the information flow in our increasingly totalitarian country have thrown out the Baby—and are trying to drink His bath water.

It will not work. Let me prove this by the following thought experiment: I cannot accept the idea that AIDS is a punishment from God for sins against purity. In fact, I cannot accept the notion that sodomy and related actions are evil in themselves. I reject the traditional sexual ethics of the Church and the biblical authorities that support them. And since Jesus said, “If you love me, do my will,” I must reject Him, too. The Bible that speaks of Him is little more than a beautifully written historical document filled with moral injunctions modern men cannot follow. It forbids sexual behavior that our laws, our culture, our schools, and now our military have come to approve. When read aloud, certain sections of it could be considered hate speech. It advocates opinions so extreme they could not even be printed in the *New York Times*. I therefore renounce Christ and all His works and all His empty promises. I am now a neopagan, and proud of it. Therefore, I no longer have a religious reason to disapprove of homosexuals and their behavior, so I can look on AIDS as simply a tragedy.

Or a comedy. Because strictly speaking, there is no reason why I am *obligated* to feel compassion for anyone. What is more, on a purely visceral, nonmoral level, I find *I still do not like homosexuals*. The things they do to each other strike me as grotesque and repulsive. I would rather not have them around, setting awful fashion trends, camping it up at night clubs, holding drag queen balls at Mardi Gras. I do not happen to like modern dance or Broadway musicals, and I get my hair cut by an old Italian grandfather from Palermo. In fact, as I look at the obituary pages, filled with designers and choreographers and mime stylists fading away like dried flowers, felled by euphemisms, laid waste by “a prolonged illness” and mourned by their “long-time companions,” it is all I can do not to fall over laughing or hoist a drink to the thought of all those job openings waiting for guys who are “straight like me.” (Just think what straight guys could do to, say, interior decoration! We would bring back the overstuffed recliner and the prints of poker-playing dogs, find creative ways to frame *Penthouse* pin-ups and Polaroids of our cars.)

And why not? I have no obligation to love my enemies, or to visit the sick or comfort the afflicted. Those irritating obligations vanished with the ghost of Christ. Now I am a different man, empowered to follow my feelings. And my feelings lead me to chuckle, gently, over the sudden blight on the pansy crop. The only downside to the whole business is the incredible expense of keeping all these festering lilies alive. That money could be much better spent. For instance, did you know that *hundreds of small breweries throughout America are on the verge of closing*? That’s right, America’s rich tradition of locally brewed beers is in grave peril. I would like to see some money diverted from the “AZT for Aesthetes” fund to something re-

ally useful.

There is no reason for them to die painfully, of course. I am not one of those guys who sits around watching mice die slowly in glue traps, just for the hell of it. (Well, not anymore.) We might as well save the gay-boys a slow, lingering death and save America’s endangered breweries with one clear, straightforward solution: euthanasia.

It worked in the 30’s when the Germans got tired of paying for the upkeep of the mentally ill. You did not find homeless psychos on the streets of Hitler’s Nuremberg, pestering people for money with stupid little limericks that rhymed “fast lane” with “spare change.” No siree. Those neopagans knew what they were doing, and so does this one.

There is nothing ennobling about suffering, nothing valuable in the lives of the weak and the unproductive. Neither the unwanted fetus, nor the drooling retard, nor the old cancer patient, nor the AIDS-rotted old graphic designer—none of them is sacred. They are like sick pets, deserving of a merciful death and no more. If people may fornicate like beasts, then they must expect to be treated like beasts.

Of course, you may disagree with me. You may *like* decaying sodomites, for whatever reason. (I myself would fork something over to keep the Pet Shop Boys alive, should they need it.) That is your choice, and in my new neopagan faith I am now pro-choice. But it is an arbitrary choice, with no more moral force than my preference for endangered beers. Queers or beers, the neopagan is free to choose, without the heavy weight of the Christian tradition pressing down on him, demanding that he treat every life as sacred, pray for sinners’ conversion, tend the dying, and try to see in human suffering some religious meaning. Once you leave Christ’s world and His Word, all of that is so much nostalgic hogwash. You cannot borrow Christian compassion for man without accepting the Christian view of man; like a pig in a wedding dress, the trick will fool no one and will irritate the pig.

Had enough of neopaganism? It is all the rage in Europe, among the skinheads. They admit that Christianity is the greatest barrier in their quest to create a racist society, since it asserts the fundamental sanctity of all life, regardless of ethnicity. They explicitly reject it as Hitler did, and for the same reasons. The sexual radicals in our country do not realize it, but by chipping away at Christianity, they are helping to prepare the way for similar movements in America. If they are not careful, they may get more than they deserve.

For the Christian, AIDS is a summons to conversion, not merely for those who have the disease, but for the whole corrupted mass of society, drunk with pride and lust and the love of power that comes with technology. It is God’s punishment not just for sodomy and drug abuse, but also for promiscuity, contraception, divorce, abortion, and all the other crimes we have committed against the natural law and God’s will. This plague is a challenge for us to hate the sin but love the sinner; to tend the dying without deceiving or scandalizing the healthy; to turn the Church into a hospital and hospice for sinners, united by their deep imperfections and fear of God and their hope in His infinite mercy.

Which brings me back to the scapular, that little square brown tag designed to scratch the flesh and remind the sinner of his mortality, his obligation to repent, and the nettlesome persistence of God, His relentless desire for the salvation of each and every soul. Perhaps it is not like the AIDS ribbon at all; it is meant to be felt and not seen. <C>

Moving Beyond Myths

by Christine Haynes

"The difficulty in life is the choice."

—George Moore



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women

by Christina Hoff Sommers
New York: Simon & Schuster;
320 pp., \$23.00



Please excuse the personal anecdotes scattered throughout this essay. As a woman, I found it difficult to write a standard third-person review and instead drew on my own experiences and emotions in responding to this book. Rejecting rationality, logic, and "vertical" thinking, I recognized that my female status alone qualifies me to pontificate on women's issues. For-

Christine Haynes was the assistant editor of Chronicles. She is now a graduate student at the University of Chicago, where she is trying to avoid the gender feminists and get a serious education in European history.

unately, Chilton Williamson was sensitive to this particular tenet of the new feminist epistemology, even if his interest in upholding the male power structure led him to delete all fem-speak from my piece.

While visiting college campuses last spring in an effort to decide on a graduate program in history, I encountered what Christina Hoff Sommers terms "gender feminism." At New York University, for example, a French social historian asked whether I was interested in gender issues and showed surprise when I replied that I was not. At the University of Chicago, I heard a graduate student berate female classmates who refused to identify themselves as feminists: they were "ungrateful," she said, to the activists who had paved the way for their accomplishments; she implied that any woman in academia who does not subscribe to Ms. magazine is undeserving of the meager gains her predecessors

won for her.

Who Stole Feminism? is the much-talked-about book that explodes a variety of feminist myths. Sommers, an associate professor of philosophy at Clark University, has done extensive fact-checking to disprove a number of "noble lies" told by activists and journalists to advance the feminist cause. This is the book that disproves the statistic that 150,000 girls and women die from anorexia each year; that refutes the myth that domestic violence increases by 40 percent on Super Bowl Sunday; that shows that the March of Dimes never published a study listing battery of pregnant women as the leading cause of birth defects; that proves that the expression "rule of thumb" did not come from a medieval law allowing men to beat their wives with a rod no bigger around than the thumb. Sommers also analyzes inflated rape statistics and the "backlash" myth in her effort to show how gender feminists (anti-Estab-

lishment feminists who see the world through a prism of sex and gender and who “seek to persuade the public that American women are not the free creatures that we think we are”) have usurped the women’s movement from the more classically liberal “equity feminists.” While *Who Stole Feminism?* repeats arguments made by other writers (such as Philip Jenkins, writing in *Chronicles*), and while it illustrates that both left and right can always find studies to support their points, it does serve as a useful compilation of the horror stories set in circulation by the feminist movement in recent years. Moreover, it discloses how easily mainstream media and politicians accept and repeat these stories, whether because they recognize their sensationalistic effect or because they are too lazy to check their sources. The Super Bowl Sunday story is particularly disheartening in this respect, as an organization formed to promote “fairness and accuracy in reporting” (FAIR) stood silently by at a press conference in January 1993 while a coalition of women’s groups misquoted a study done at Old Dominion University and warned women to protect themselves on game day.

The real merit of *Who Stole Feminism?*, however, is its exposé of the nonsense promulgated by gender feminists in our universities. As a recent graduate of the University of Michigan (home to Catherine MacKinnon), I was surprised by none of this. I was fortunate in my undergraduate career to avoid gender politics and multiculturalism (the sole exception being a French literature class in which Flaubert was replaced on the syllabus by a woman writer whose name I do not even remember and whose novel involved a hero and a heroine who switched sexual roles). But nonacademics (and especially parents of present or future college students) could use a hard look at what passes for education these days.

Sommers unveils what she calls the “transformationist” agenda and shows how in conferences and classrooms everywhere the gender feminists are undermining our traditional knowledge base. Especially insightful is her analysis of how the transformationists have altered the study of history. Not content to add a few neglected women writers to course reading lists or to discuss women’s role in social history (as legitimate historians have been doing since the 1960’s),

they want to rewrite—translation: fabricate—political, military, and intellectual history so that women assume a role which in reality they never played. In response to transformationist dolts, like the man in one of her audiences who argued that Martha Washington may very well have provided our first President with every idea he ever had, Sommers writes: “Any history that is faithful to the facts must acknowledge that in the past women were simply not permitted the degree of freedom commensurate with their talents. . . . Lamentable as this may be, there is simply no honest way of writing women back into the historical narrative in a way that depicts them as movers and shakers of equal importance to men.” Sommers’ argument is not new, but it does represent a much-needed dose of common sense.

Equally true is her argument that the “safe zone” of the feminist classroom is endangering the education of young women. Allowing these women to abandon philosophy and Great Books, languages and history, math and science for women’s studies courses in which they are required merely to divulge their innermost secrets, discuss their changing emotions, and develop a radical attitude will only widen any remaining gap in achievement between them and their male counterparts. Moreover, Sommers reports, students (and teachers) indoctrinated in the tenets of women’s studies contribute to the intimidating and censorious atmosphere sweeping American campuses. Another example from my campus visits last spring illustrates the point. A statue I stopped to admire on the grounds of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had been moved from a central location to “an out-of-the-way place where no one would be forced to see it” because feminist students, who organized a Committee Against Offensive Statues, were insulted by it. The statue, entitled *The Student Body*, depicts a male, who is reading a book, with his arm around a female, who is holding an apple.

Perhaps the most disturbing effect of gender feminism on college students is the condescension, elitism, and self-preoccupation it fosters in them. As evidenced by my “friend” at the University of Chicago, female students converted to the cause are completely disconnected from the feelings and experiences of women outside the Ivory Tower—whether they be single professionals or

welfare moms, working mothers or stay-at-home ones. While this may not be the young feminists’ fault (resources and rhetoric are disproportionately directed at privileged, educated women: campus rape crisis centers are overstaffed, while urban battered women’s shelters are hurting for funds), their whining does nothing to help those whom feminism has neglected—or maybe even harmed. Who can possibly argue, for instance, that a woman with a high school diploma who works in an office 40 hours a week; who has two children in daycare to look after in the evenings, on weekends, and when they are sick; and who is responsible for all the cooking and cleaning, because her husband refuses to do women’s work, has been “liberated” by the women’s movement?

Self-preoccupation has led gender feminists to an unhealthy focus on the female psyche. Numerous books and studies in recent years address women’s lack of self-esteem, blaming the problem on our hierarchical, male-dominated society. Two studies on self-esteem in adolescent girls drew considerable attention among journalists and even politicians. The Gender Equity in Education Act was proposed by Patricia Schroeder (and endorsed by Ted Kennedy, of all people!) in response to findings by the Association of American University Women (“Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America,” 1991) and the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women (“How Schools Shortchange Girls,” 1992) that girls’ self-esteem drops sharply between the ages of 11 and 16, in part because girls get less attention from teachers than boys. Sommers, after questioning the research on which these findings are based, points out that no one has been able to establish a clear correlation between self-esteem and achievement. (Black girls—and black boys—have the highest self-esteem scores, but they also have the lowest achievement scores.) She argues, moreover, that the small gap in test scores between boys and girls in the United States is nothing compared to the gap between American children and foreign children. (Asian children have the lowest self-esteem scores and the highest test scores, with the *average* Japanese student equaling or surpassing America’s best and brightest.) America is not just shortchanging its girls; it is shortchanging its children, period. Gloria Steinem, in *Revolution from Within*, says the solu-

tion to low self-esteem among women (as among men) is to unlearn the values and knowledge our patriarchal society has instilled in us and to relearn our true selves through the discovery of an inner child. She is dead wrong. We have already had too much unlearning and relearning, and our civilization is much the worse for it. We need real, hard-core learning, and we need it now.

Similar psychobabble is found in Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*. According to Wolf, the destruction of the "Feminine Mystique" (by Betty Friedan and other 60's writers and activists) has allowed women to make exterior gains, but the "Beauty Myth" that replaced it keeps women suffering from interior pains. She provides an alarming disclosure of the painful practices women undergo in the name of beauty and a thorough analysis of women's "raving, itching, parching product lust," but she fails to see that women's constant self-surveillance is the result not of some male conspiracy but of the narcissism and superficiality of the commercial culture that reached its apotheosis in the 1980's. Such vanity is as prevalent—and despicable—in men as it is in women.

In blaming the "male hegemony" for women's self-esteem problems, the gender feminists miss a couple of critical facts. First, boys' self-esteem as well as girls' plummets at adolescence; adolescence is a difficult time for both sexes, and any measurable drop in girls' self-esteem between the ages of 11 and 16 is a developmental and not necessarily a permanent condition. "It's only a phase," mothers are fond of saying, and most often they are right. Second, women and girls are themselves responsible for this drop in self-esteem, through the pressure both older role models and peers exert on teenage girls to conform to their standards. It is our mothers, sisters, aunts, girlfriends, and even female strangers who teach us how to behave as women, who encourage us to dress up, play with our hair and makeup, and pursue boys—often before we are even interested in such activities ourselves.

Women's culture, mainly in the form of magazines aimed at the female population from 13 years to 60-plus, is a major source of this pressure. Women's magazines exert a huge influence on girls and women, whether educated or functionally illiterate, professional or working-

class, in their articles (both serious and frivolous) and in their air-brushed pictures. Steinem (in a new collection of essays entitled *Moving Beyond Words*) and Wolf both show how pernicious an effect such magazines can have on women's self-esteem, as readers inevitably compare themselves to the "perfect" women they see on newsstands everywhere. While they neglect to mention that the staffs of these magazines are dominated by women, they do an admirable job of exposing the role corporate culture, through advertising dollars, plays in making these images such a central part of women's culture. This economic (not patriarchal) pressure forces the editors of women's magazines to present their audience with an inconsistent and confusing product. Advice on how to make a female voice heard in the workplace is followed by tips on how to attract and please a man; articles on pursuing a higher education are followed by suggestions on how to apply eye shadow for an evening out; or, in one of the most preposterous examples I have seen, a magazine which consistently argues that males and females should equally divide household responsibilities complained that a new advertising campaign for the old-fashioned manual lawn mower was a ploy to get women to take over what traditionally was a man's job.

Such inconsistencies arise because the equity feminism of the 1960's and 70's was merely grafted onto the old domesticity and beauty themes of women's magazines; advertisers still demand articles featuring their products. The result has been a legitimate and dangerous myth that Sommers neglects to explore: the Superwoman Myth. Because Sommers does not discuss the influence of women's magazines (except to say that they repeat the statistics and stories generated by gender feminist scholars and activists), she does not encounter the one threat to contemporary women that gender feminists like Steinem and Wolf are not lying about. The antifeminist (and antiwoman) stereotype of Superwoman as depicted in contemporary women's magazines is a "male-imitative, dress-for-success woman carrying a briefcase—as well as raising perfect children, cooking gourmet meals, having multiple orgasms, and entertaining beautifully" (in the words of Steinem); she "took on all at once the roles of professional housewife, professional careerist, and professional beauty" (according to

Wolf).

Sommers is right that women (and especially white, middle- and upper-class women) need to stop complaining about the past and get on with creating their future, and she is right that this will require more learning and hard work; she neglects to tell us, however, that equity feminism, while it has opened up our options, does not let us have it all. After all, even men have to make sacrifices. My father certainly moved more slowly up the career ladder than he could have if he hadn't made spending time with his family a priority, and although my brothers and I respect him all the more for his choice, women cannot expect to be exempt from such difficult decisions. In *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf asserts that the "pernicious fib" of "postfeminism" is "making young women, who face many of the same old problems, once again blame themselves—since it's all been fixed, right?" Wrong. Of course it hasn't "all been fixed"; "it" never has, and "it" never will. Prefeminism or postfeminism, life is hard for women, just as it is for men.

Even Betty Friedan, mother of the women's movement of the 1960's and 70's, recognizes this reality. When I saw her speak at the University of Michigan several years ago, Friedan admitted that her wave of feminism had in some ways made life more difficult for women by giving them more choice. Choice, as Tocqueville recognized in analyzing our society 150 years ago, can result in uncertainty and envy. Whereas in an aristocracy everyone knows his place, in a democracy each person is supposed to define his position for himself. Wolf ranks self-esteem alongside "money, jobs, child care, safety" as "a vital resource for women that is deliberately kept in inadequate supply" and that is presumably an entitlement to be demanded, like health care, from the government. While Sommers' book demonstrates how susceptible the media and politicians are to such demands (witness the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem praised by Steinem in *Revolution from Within*), women would do themselves a disservice by joining the loud, but far from melodious, chorus of the gender feminists. Instead, they (with men) need to get beyond New Age nonsense, stop blaming the system, make their own choices, and learn to live with them.

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If Nixon Had Been Friends With Bob Woodward

by Arnold Beichman

The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House

by Bob Woodward

New York: Simon & Schuster;

352 pp., \$24.00



For starters, I propose to say the unthinkable: the unnamed coauthors with Bob Woodward of this book are President and Mrs. Clinton. All the inside stories dealing with the first 18 months of the Clinton administration, the reported dialogue, who said what to whom, and the secret memoranda were, I believe, handed to Mr. Woodward by the Clintons, by White House staff members, or by nonstaff advisors with Mr. Clinton's approval. If I am right, then Mr. Woodward is to be honored with the title of Spinmeister-in-Chief.

I base my coauthorship theory on the following clues, which, added together, make my theory more than plausible:

One, all the stories in Mr. Woodward's book are pro-Clinton. The chaos, the disorganization, the indecisiveness, the running around in all directions, the President's fumbling of issues, begging congressmen for their individual votes, none of this behavior makes Mr. Clinton look bad. It does make Congress look bad, especially Senators Bob Kerry and David L. Boren, among others. I could not find a single example of anything that would hurt Mr. Clinton with the voters. In fact, most of the "inside" stuff shows him to be a fine leader learning how to get around the Beltway, a decent chap with a tendency (understandably) to flood his monologues with the f-word, smart and tolerant of human imperfections including his own, and, above all, a President who, while always in charge, is always willing to listen.

Two, I am prepared to swallow all doubts about the authenticity of Mr. Woodward's revelations, something I was

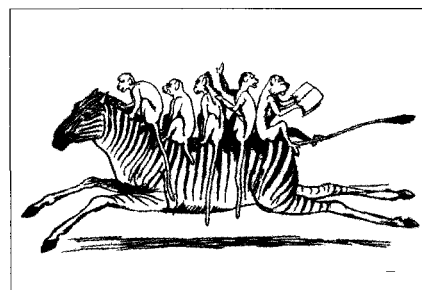
not prepared to do when he reported that he had actually interviewed the dying CIA director William J. Casey. In the present case, I am prepared to accept Mr. Woodward's report because, while his Deep Throats are prepared to destroy each other, they are deeply protective of the President.

Three, the book's story line shows Mr. Clinton to be a skillful politician who got his way with the budget, his economic plan, and other domestic matters against a recalcitrant Congress, although for a while there were "mounting political embarrassments" due to "side issues such as gays in the military." In other words, his domestic agenda went well, as we saw most recently with the passage of the anticrime bill in August. Where the domestic agenda suffered, as with his attempt to install gays in the military, a wave of the wand and it all disappears. Most significantly, on foreign policy issues, where every day is a group-grope at the White House, there is not a word. In fact, the nine mentions of Warren Christopher have nothing at all to do with American foreign policy matters. Oh yes, the Secretary of State tells Senator Boren that a domestic defeat for Mr. Clinton would hurt the United States internationally. Obviously, a discussion of foreign policy issues would have reflected badly on Mr. Clinton. Mr. Woodward says that his purpose in writing this book was to report on domestic economic issues. Thus if things went badly, Congress could be blamed. But on Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti—who else but Mr. Clinton? It takes an extraordinary effort of will to avoid discussing the foreign policy of the world's superpower Numero Uno, especially as that policy affects the domestic agenda that so concerns Mr. Woodward—balance of trade, overseas markets, the value of the American dollar, economic relations with Japan, and the G-7.

Four, so wary is Mr. Woodward about dealing with the administration's foreign policy that there is not a single mention of Strobe Talbott, one of Mr. Clinton's closest friends and advisors, whose house is an occasional home-away-from-home for Mr. Clinton. Is it conceivable that whenever the President and Mr. Talbott met, they only discussed problems in

Checheniya?

Five, even more astonishing than Mr. Woodward's shunning any discussion of foreign policy reverses and the minor role accorded Mr. Christopher is that there is virtually no mention of any of the scandals—Whitewater, bimbotics and liaisons, the White House travel office, Hillary's personal stock investments, White House resignations—that have swirled around the White House for 18 months. There are four mentions of the Vincent Foster "suicide" but nothing a newspaper reader did not already know. There is no "inside story" here to explain the removal of Mr. Foster's White House files the night of the tragedy. Mr. Woodward or his informants are curiously reticent about such matters. These events may not have been on Mr. Clinton's agenda, but they surely were domestic.



Six, Mr. Woodward is the *Washington Post's* assistant managing editor for investigations. "Investigations" from a Woodwardian view means *exposés* about nasty doings in, say, the office of the Chief Executive or among his minions. That used to be the case during the Reagan and Bush administrations. Mr. Woodward has established a record as a policy prescriber, not merely as a muckraker. As Michael Ledeen has pointed out, Mr. Woodward's past stories show him to be a policy pusher as well as a reporter. But where are those meaty "investigations" exposing nefarious crimes in the administration today, and where were they during the time of Mr. Clinton's Arkansas fiefdom? In *Agenda*, the author is quite clearly for Mr. Clinton's policies. Which is entirely understandable, because why, after all, would these 250 (Mr. Woodward's figure) inside sources be talking with such candor to the enemy?

Seven, at a time when liberal journal-

ists like Michael Kramer of *Time* magazine, Joe Klein and Jonathan Alter of *Newsweek*, and Michael Kelly of the *New York Times* (and now of the *New Yorker*) are dumping on the Clintons, Mr. Woodward has demonstrated something Joseph Schumpeter once said: "Selective information, if in itself correct, is an attempt to lie by speaking the truth." He has shown us that Mr. Clinton is doing a great job against great odds. And by publishing the most intimate details of White House interactions, Mr. Woodward forces his colleagues to deal with the administration on his terms, not on theirs. Which is why I call him Spinmeister-in-Chief. *Agenda* will be regarded by historians as an essential archive in evaluating and writing about the Clinton administration.

Mr. Woodward has been attacked for his failure to provide footnotes. Well, now, when George Shultz, Don Regan, Ed Meese, and David Stockman published their memoirs, they included no footnotes to speak of. The authors themselves were the footnotes. Footnotes in and of themselves are no guarantee of authenticity or even accuracy, unless one is listing page numbers of a book. Mr. Woodward's technique, technically speaking, is admirable. Ira Magaziner "rolled his eyes," "Clinton began to take notes furiously," "Grunwald snapped," "Stephanopolous thought [Vice-President] Gore at times had a tin ear," "Clinton leaned back and pulled his feet up on the bottom rung of the rocker," and my favorite of all, "[Roger] Altman leaned down on a glass-topped table, palms down. When he stood up, two sweaty palm imprints were left on the table." If there were an annual Artistic Verisimilitude Medal, Mr. Woodward would deserve it (sweaty) hands down.

Agenda is really a Beltway book. Unless you are part of the Washington scene or a political scientist, it is boring. Perhaps somebody ought to organize a "Beltway-Book-of-the-Month-Club" in which case Mr. Woodward would be, I am sure, a Main Selection. All he would have to worry about would be sharing his bountiful royalties with Hillary.

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Acting Up by Christopher Check

Liberty & Sexuality:
The Right to Privacy and
the Making of
Roe v. Wade

by David J. Garrow
New York: Macmillan;
981 pp., \$28.00



Faithful Roman Catholics are routinely criticized (this book is no exception) for their unwillingness to condone the use of contraception. Although it is commonly believed that opposition to contraception is unique to Catholic doctrine, it was only recently that Protestants gave up the same fight. As recently as the 40's and 50's, the Anglican C.S. Lewis, in two of his most important books (*That Hideous Strength* and *The Abolition of Man*), portrayed contraception as something diabolical.

In 1930 the Lambeth Council of Anglican Bishops approved artificial contraception as a method of limiting family size provided "this was done in the light of . . . Christian principles." One year later, the Federal Council of Churches in America formed a committee on "marriage and the home" which endorsed "careful and restrained" use of contraception. While the Catholic clergy did roundly criticize the decisions, the *Washington Post*, also rebuking the "modernistic plan for the mechanical regulation or suppression of human birth," as well as "schemes for the scientific production of human souls," printed a harsh editorial, pulling no punches:

Carried to its logical conclusion, the committee's report if carried into effect would sound the death-knell of marriage as a holy institution, by establishing degrading practices which would encourage indiscriminate immorality. If the churches are to become organizations for political and "scientific" propaganda they should be honest and reject the Bible, scoff at Christ as an obsolete and unscientific teacher, and strike out boldly as champions of politics and science as modern substitutes for old-time religion.

What the *Post* predicted—the trail from "careful and restrained use" and "Christian principles" to condom distribution in the public schools, socially sanctioned sodomy, and the "right" to kill an unborn child—follows directly down the slippery slope.

The latest text in the field is Mr. Garrow's. That he rejoices in the steady erosion of social morality, born of civil disobedience (Garrow's specialty, it seems) and blessed by the federal courts, hardly matters. Christians who favor contraception while opposing abortion, whether unable or unwilling to acknowledge the theological connection joining the first to the second, might try reading what must be the most detailed, if unoriginal, account to date of the legal and political links. By wading through the not uncomplicated machinations that led to the legalization of contraception, created a right to kill unborn babies, and ended (dare we hope?) with the social approval of virtually every possible sexual deviance, they will gain a clear enough picture of the worldview of the author, and of his heroines and heroes, to make the relationship obvious: refusing to accept the mysterious but inseparable bond between intercourse and the creation of life malforms the conscience to such a degree as to make acceptable the most bizarre and immoral behavior. Civil disobedients, murderers, eugenicists, sodomites, fornicators, and *ménage à trois* participants, all idolizing "privacy" as they chew through the Decalogue, make up just some of the people whom Garrow describes in his "Acknowledgments" as "wonderful and impressive."

The temptation to give Garrow credit for not having whitewashed the opinions and actions of his protagonists is easily overcome. Why should he have? In his world, from which all standards of decency have been stripped, what behavior can possibly require the airbrush? Where intolerance, judgment, "hate and anger," and imposing one's morality on another are the only sins, deceit, eugenics, civil disobedience, sodomy—to say nothing of murder—are, if not virtues, at least morally neutral. It may well be that the only "truth" Garrow would be willing to embrace is the "right" of each American to pursue immoral behavior, unfettered by either conscience or consequence and protected by the federal courts.

If this massive book had any value, then, it would be as a clinical investiga-

tion of the minds of those people—perhaps the majority of Americans—who understand neither the framework of the natural law nor the way in which our Constitution was intended to operate therein. Very few readers, I suspect, will actually take the time to slog through some 700 pages (plus another 200-odd of footnotes), beginning with a litany of every social gathering, meeting, piece of correspondence, speech, protest, court appearance, and petty catfight of a platoon of unhappy “upper-class, north-eastern women” with ill-fitting IUD’s and ending with ACLU attorneys running to the defense of a Virginia couple who photographed their escapades of fellatio with a Jamaican immigrant named “Earl Romeo Dunn.”

There are, to be sure, inspiring moments which recount the convictions of those who defend chastity, purity, and life, episodes which Garrow presents as examples of the goofy and excessive things God-fearing people do and say. We learn of Catholic hospitals with the courage to dismiss doctors who publicly support Planned Parenthood and of clerics unafraid to defend publicly the tenets of their faith. One Hartford priest, Father Andrew J. Kelly, whom Garrow labels “vociferous,” described advocates of contraception as “suicidal individualists . . . [who would] change, and by change I mean liquidate, the eternal moral code which makes man, in all his human acts, responsible to his Divine Creator.” The whole book, in fact, is laced with citations of sound legal and theological objections to the very positions its author tries to defend.

Garrow’s exhaustive research has uncovered a plethora of arguments in defense of contraception, abortion, and many other immoralities. However, his failure to formulate his own (new or used) justification for infanticide and judicial tyranny forces the reader to deduce his position, not from any stab at a logical argument, but simply from the rhetoric he employs in the depiction of people he admires. Margaret Sanger is a “crusader”; the collective efforts of her coven are described as a “struggle,” or “activism,” and their striking down of social and moral codes “victories,” or, at the very least, “progress.” The beneficiaries of their work are “the downtrodden,” “the poor,” “the needy” and, of course, “ethnic immigrant women.” (The same classes of people, by the way, that the Lambeth Bishops claimed they

were helping.)

Onward they march, their eyes fixed on their true goal: federal protection of the “pursuit of happiness.” One early counselor for Sanger makes it clear exactly what that is: “A right of copulation without conception is asserted upon behalf of women in general.” And lawyers for Michael Hardwick (whose defense receives the gushing support of Julia Roberts in the film version of *The Pelican Brief*) state it even more clearly: “sexual conduct in private between consenting adults is protected by a fundamental right of privacy guaranteed by the first, third, fourth, fifth, ninth, and fourteenth Amendments.” James Madison, patron saint of ACT-UP today, NAMBLA tomorrow.

Total sexual license, observed both G.K. Chesterton and Aldous Huxley, is the only freedom the totalitarian state offers its masses, because it is a cheap and effective method of reducing them to slavery. Give us pleasure without consequence, and in time our consciences will dull sufficiently that we will not protest as the state takes our property, our wives, and our children. We will not even notice, in our endless flight from suffering and our perpetual pursuit of the right to feel good, that the hands gradually tightening the irons around our ankles are our own.

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No Other Epitaph

by David J. Porter

Original Intentions: On the Making and Ratification of the United States Constitution
by M.E. Bradford

Athens: University of Georgia Press;
165 pp., \$24.95



Written documents should be interpreted with an eye toward discerning the intent of the author. When the Constitution of the United States is the text under consideration, the relevant intentions are those of the men who drafted and ratified the document. This

proposition reflects a long-established canon of construction: common-law judges as far back as the 12th century invoked original intent. So did Sir Edward Coke, Matthew Bacon, natural lawyer Thomas Rutherford, William Blackstone, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, who wrote that he “entirely concur[red] in the propriety of resorting to the sense in which the Constitution was accepted and ratified by the nation. In that sense alone it is the legitimate Constitution. And if that be not the guide in expounding it, there can be no security for a consistent and stable, more than for a faithful, exercise of its powers.”

Today, the jurisprudence of original intent is severely out of favor among most academics and many judges such as Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who in 1985 wrote approvingly of “boldly dynamic interpretation . . . departing radically from the original understanding.” Judicial departures from the Framers’ understanding occurred relatively infrequently during the Republic’s early years, with the spectacular exception of Chief Justice John Marshall’s national bank decision *McCullock v. Maryland* (1819). But the Court has been at sea for much of the 20th century, and the debate over interpretive method has been especially heated since 1985, the year then-Attorney General Edwin Meese urged the Supreme Court to adhere to the original meaning of constitutional provisions and Justice William Brennan responded by calling originalism “arrogance cloaked as humility.” That exchange, followed by Robert Bork’s failed nomination to the Supreme Court, brought noninterpretivists out of the woodwork, and scores of books and articles have subsequently been published on the subject. The standard argument of judicial activists begins with the presupposition that textual interpretation is impossible because each interpreter brings to the task a set of beliefs, determined by some relevant community of readers, that not only prevents him from discerning the meaning intended by the author but strips the text itself of meaning apart from that given to it by the reader.

M.E. Bradford dismissed such deconstructionist notions as “obfuscatory” and “glib ingenuity.” As if to prove his point single-handedly, Bradford generated, over the past decade or so, a mountain of scholarship revealing the views of the extraordinary men who framed and ratified

this country's fundamental law. The first fruits of that research resulted in *A Worthy Company*, a fascinating collection of biographical sketches of the men who gathered for Philadelphia's Great Convention in 1787. In his last and posthumously published book, *Original Intentions: On the Making and Ratification of the United States Constitution*, Bradford applies his knowledge of the 18th-century milieu to the Philadelphia and state ratifying conventions, yielding eight purely original chapters. Read together, these essays constitute a compelling brief for the minimalist understanding of the Constitution that was ascendant during the salad days of this country's federal jurisprudence.

Bradford draws upon Jonathan Elliot's *Debates of the Several States Ratifying Conventions*, among other records, to reconstruct the dynamics of three such state conventions. In Massachusetts, Federalists who made no secret of their antidemocratic sentiment seized upon Shays' Rebellion as an example of the dreadful licentiousness that was likely to result if power were not more centralized. The Federalist cause in Massachusetts was jeopardized by fierce New England exclusiveness and an aversion to being "unequally yoked together" with the Southern states, but it eventually prevailed with the addition of amendments reflecting Antifederalist concerns. A distinguishing feature of the Massachusetts ratifiers, Bradford notes, was their tendency to view government as a positive good, given by God for the well-being and improvement of His covenant people.

By contrast, ratification of the United States Constitution in North and South Carolina was achieved with little talk of the advantages of energetic government. In fact, Federalists at the Charleston and Hillsborough conventions saved the plan for union only by assuaging—not rejecting—Antifederalist concerns at every turn. Charles Pinckney, for example, neatly inverted the Antifederalist argument that the proposed constitution granted the government power to derogate unenumerated state rights by promising that "no powers could be executed, or assumed [by the federal government], but such as were expressly delegated." And in North Carolina, Federalists insisted, against Antifederalist warnings of despotism, that no branch of the national government, especially the judiciary, could meddle with the internal

affairs of state governments. Perhaps the only participant in the ratification debates of these Southern states who foresaw the extent to which general provisions of the Constitution could be abused through loose construction was the conservative Rawlins Lowndes, who declared that he "wished for no other epitaph, than to have inscribed on his tomb, 'Here lies the man that opposed the Constitution, because it was ruinous to the liberty of America.'"

Bradford's essay on "Religion and the Framers" stands in sharp contrast to the Supreme Court's modern Establishment Clause decisions, and illustrates more clearly than any other chapter just how far adrift courts can go when they abandon the original understanding of constitutional provisions in favor of unenumerated "constitutional principles." Almost to a man, the Framers were orthodox Christians, cognizant of God's providence in their own lives and unhesitant in their willingness to invoke His name and pray for His blessings in their public endeavors. These men would not have dreamed of judging laws touching religion under an agnostic standard like that delineated by the Court in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), which demands that every government act have a strictly secular purpose and remain free from the taint of religion. It is ironic indeed that Thomas Jefferson, an indisputable outlier from his contemporaries with regard to religious matters, is the Framers whose ideas form the basis for modern church-state jurisprudence. Jefferson was out of the country, in France, at the time the Bill of Rights was passed by Congress and ratified by the states, and his famous "wall of separation" (a phrase he did not coin until 1802) flew in the face of almost every American colony's political history before that time.

The most elegant chapters in *Original Intentions*, "Such a Government as the People Will Approve: The Great Convention as Comic Action" and "The Best Constitution in Existence: The Influence of the British Example on the Framers of our Fundamental Law," remind us of Bradford at his familiar best, as the great rhetorician assiduously mining the historical record and then arranging its details into a powerful narrative. Bradford recalls that America's *novus ordo seclorum* was essentially inherited, with modifications wrought through political compromise. Our

Constitution was not drawn from the pure waters of general principle; it is not a document that aspires to theoretical perfection. Because the basic liberties and privileges possessed by Americans are specific and historically rooted, they are subject to discovery, application, and formal amendment, but not (legitimately) to re-creation according to evolving standards of "justice." Nor are the words of the Constitution autonomous symbols that can mean different things to different ages. That is why, to return to the title and theme of *Original Intentions*, constitutional interpretation is concerned not just with the abstract meaning of text, but with the utterance of it by men situated in time, place, and circumstance. Of all people, Dr. Bradford appreciated that truth, and his final collection of essays is faithful to it.

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Negative Capability

by William Mills

The Crossing

by Cormac McCarthy

New York: Knopf; 426 pp., \$23.00



So many things have been said in praise of McCarthy's work that it is hard not to sound like an echo. Inevitably, the reviewer notes the energy and grace of his style, and there is no gainsaying that. The relentless power of his sentences and the tautness of the action can leave a reader emotionally exhausted. After reading *The Crossing* some time ago, I dropped back and read *Blood Meridian*, which I had missed somehow; afterward I told my wife that I was going to have to let this wildcat go for a while. I was simply drained from following his spoor in such wild terrain and in such weather.

Earlier appraisals of McCarthy's work have often lacked any recognition of its humor, whether of situation or of dialogue. In *The Crossing*, the laconic exchanges between Billy Parham, the cen-

tral character, and his brother Boyd, or between some of the older men, are vintage American Rural. An example of this occurs early in the novel in a conversation between Billy and an old man driving a Model A pickup. Billy has been out setting traps for a female wolf, but doesn't particularly want to say so to the old man who has stopped him in the road. Billy instead remarks that he has seen a lot of coyote sign. The old man: "I aint surprised. They done everthing down at our place but come in and set at the table." Then the old man whips out a big lighter and in the big flame lights his cigarette.

I had to quit using the highest, he said.
Yessir.
You married?
No sir. I aint but sixteen.
Dont get married. Women are crazy.
Yessir.
You'll think you've found one that aint but guess what?
What.
She will be too.

Before they part, the old man tells a tale about the New Mexico mountain lion talking to the Texas mountain lion, a fine example of Southwestern yarnspinning. The Texas lion was gaunt and starving. When he explained he had been hunting Texans in the traditional way, screaming and then jumping on them, the New Mexico lion said, "it's a wonder you aint dead. Said that's all wrong for your Texans and I dont see how you got through the winter atall. Said look here. First of all when you holler thataway it scares the sh-t out of em. Then when you jump on top of em thataway it knocks the wind out of em. Hell, son. You aint got nothin left but buckles and boots."

Such tough, high laughter serves only to heighten the more serious sections of the story. For *The Crossing* is a fully realized *Bildungsroman*, a story of passage. The "crossing" first denotes Billy's crossing the Texas-Mexican border and entering another country. He must often speak a language other than his own, for he is leaving the known domain and passing to a new, unknown one. At the same time, he is crossing into manhood. Though only 16 he already has many skills, not having been reared in a pampered suburb of the American 90's, but

in the rural southwest of the 20's and 30's, Hidalgo County, New Mexico. The novel reminded me that my relative, Jesse James, was only 14 or 15 at the beginning of the War Between the States. Like Billy Parham, he developed skills of survival, of horsemanship and of arms, in his teens.

Appropriately, during this passage from innocence to experience, Billy has many teachers. Early in the story, his father teaches him to trap wolves, to conserve his horse's strength in deep snow, while his mother instructs him to keep the Sabbath and to offer thanks for their food. In the bravura performance of Part I, in which Billy learns to catch the wolf and then returns it to its home in the Mexican mountains, he seeks the ancient knowledge of trapping from an old man, Don Arnulfo. Don Arnulfo is one of the numerous sages the boy listens to throughout the narrative. Billy asks him about a wolf scent, Number Seven Matrix, that he has obtained and receives instruction not only about wolves but about the matrix of the world, upon which he is invited to meditate. "He said that the matrix was not so easily defined. Each hunter must have his own formula." Further, "El lobo es una cosa incognoscible."

Billy Parham's journeys are filled with signs of the world that he must interpret in order to live. He must weigh the different words, the different perspectives of the sages, whether of Don Arnulfo, the church caretaker, the blind man, the prima donna, or the gypsy. He is confronted with what every human being confronts: how to separate appearance from reality. He is instructed by the blind man that the visible world is a distraction, that one must listen: that the world hides more than it reveals. In a moving scene (reminiscent of Stephen Dedalus's epiphany at seeing the girl wading in the water), Billy watches the prima donna bathing naked in the river: "He saw that the world which had always been before him everywhere had been veiled from his sight. Nothing would ever be the same." Counterposed to this is the observation by the prima donna's co-worker that only the mask is real. She adds, "Perhaps it is true that nothing is hidden. Yet many do not wish to see what lies before them in plain sight. You will see."

Riding through the wilderness of signs, this vaquero-knight encounters evil, always realized in believable villains:

the horse thieves, those who took the wolf, those who stabbed his horse. Like any knight, he protects women and the weak, and tries not to lie. The poor are the quickest to recognize him for what he is and together they share and take their food as sacrament, the tortilla "the great secular host of the Mexicans." A part of his chivalric Quest is the return of his father's horse and the return of his brother's body. Throughout this story, the protagonist and his sage-teachers meditate on evil and justice. Thoughts and words about God saturate the entire novel. Perhaps *The Crossing* is above all a theodicy, or at the very least, a theodic investigation. I have not come upon any such endeavor of this magnitude in recent fiction.

McCarthy has an immense capacity for what Keats described as negative capability. Like Hamlet turning a skull in his hand, McCarthy turns the world of *The Crossing* this way, now that, asking us to consider the matter with him. His book is not a religious tract. During a time when one begins to despair about fiction being reduced to political statements by one victim group or another, it is gratifying to come upon the real thing.

William Mills is the editor of John Corrington: Southern Man of Letters (UCA Press, Conway, Arkansas).

LIBERAL ARTS



LIKE, I'M A CHRISTIAN

Julie Sterling, 19, the heterosexual sophomore president of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance at Central College, a church-affiliated, liberal arts school in Des Moines, Iowa.

"I'm Christian and I'm tired of feeling that you have to believe a certain way to be a Christian."

—from the Gannett News Service, September 1.

Letter From Inner Israel

by Jacob Neusner

Ghettoizing Jews, Hijacking Judaism



Imagine what kind of organization would adopt the following resolutions: to oppose state and local referenda and statutes restricting the civil rights of gays; to support the use of fetal tissue for the purpose of life-saving or life-enhancing(!) research; to advocate a single-payer system as the most likely means of fulfilling the principles articulated in past Organization resolutions on health care reform; to call upon our federal, state, and local governments to adopt legislation that will afford partners in committed lesbian and gay relationships the means of legally acknowledging such relationships; to support passage of legislation such as the omnibus Women's Health Equity Act. Reading these and similar resolutions, you would probably suppose that the organization is the National Organization for Women, or, more likely, the Reform Democratic Club of the Upper West Side of Manhattan. You might not guess the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, that is, the national organization of Reform Judaism in the United States, but this is indeed the organization in question, and the above resolutions stem from its 1993 biennial meeting, as reported in the Spring 1994 issue of *Reform Judaism*.

The other resolutions—for religious pluralism in Israel, support for the Israel-PLO declaration of principles, appeal to commute Jonathan Pollard's sentence to time served, support for synagogues, and the like—represent more or less mainstream positions that are particular to Jewish organizations. Reading them, you would not mistake your location.

But when the Jewish community gets together in its national organizations,

the more one floats toward the mainstream, the less distinctively Jewish the agenda becomes. Take, for example, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC). It is made up of representatives of most of the Jewish Community Federations throughout the United States as well as of the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith/Anti-Defamation League, Hadassah, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, National Council of Jewish Women, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Women's American ORT—pretty much everybody within the wall-to-wall organizational framework of American Jewry. So what do they talk about? Well—not religion.

Concerns for “community relations” cover these topics: equal opportunity and social justice; Israel and the Middle East; world Jewry and international human rights; Jewish security and the Bill of Rights; community relations concerns on the campus. Of these topics, concern for anti-Semitism, Jews in the former Soviet Union, the holocaust, and the like belong well within the framework of distinctively Jewish engagements. But what shall we make of such topics as poverty and the urban agenda; children at risk; immigration and refugee policy; public school education; health care issues; the status of women? If you have to be Jewish to care about Jews in the Soviet Union, you certainly do not have to be Jewish to meet to talk about public school education, to take one among many issues.

Why does the Jewish community adopt as a particularly, distinctively Jewish cause the support of public education to the exclusion of private education? Only the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America dissented, insisting that the Jewish community support “properly drawn educational choice programs that can constitutionally and equitably provide funds for non-public school students.”

What makes an organization of the Jewish community want to “urge the Administration and Congress to consider

as a top priority developing policies and strategies that focus on blighted urban areas, including rebuilding urban infrastructure, [and to] educate the public about the scope and causes of poverty and the need for more vigorous public policies to deal with poverty”? Why does it take the Jewish community in particular to “urge expansion of job training, apprenticeship, and community service programs that equip teenagers with job skills that will enable them to find meaningful employment”? And on and on.

In other words, what we have here is not the organized Jewish community, addressing its particular and legitimate concerns, but the circumcised sector of the Democratic Party, reviewing the party's current policy and endorsing it. Just as the communists in the bad old days organized *Yevsektzia*—the Jewish Bureau—which through Jewish agitators manipulated Jewish opinion for the party's purposes, so the organized Jewish community serves as the Jewish Bureau of the left-liberal establishment. Its issues, its emphases, its concerns predominate—and the concerns of centrist America, our issues, our emphases, our concerns never register. And, it goes without saying, the bulk of the Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative rabbinate, and a fair number of Orthodox rabbis as well, do yeoman service as cheerleaders for left-wing zealotry.

This poses two problems. First, Judaism clearly plays no role in the organized Jewish community. Whether or not the separation of church and state as now defined by the courts is what the First Amendment requires, the organized Jewish community maintains the rigid and absolute separation of Jewry from Judaism. Examining the NJCRAC program, with its utterly secular concerns, leaves no doubt on that score.

Second, when a Judaic religious organization meets, as in the case of the Reform movement, whatever currently defines the style of the left becomes God's will, making its religion stand for abortion and against the life of the fetus, in direct contradiction to the Torah. Marriage as God-ordained from Adam and Eve onward is expanded to include two Adams and no Eve; and dozens of reso-

lutions will be adopted that speak not once of God and the Torah of Sinai but of the ethnic language of "continuity and survival." "Judaism teaches" and "the far left of the Democratic Party advocates"—select your subject, the predicate will be the same.

American politics, however, do not divide up among ethnic groups, forming race-coalitions behind negotiated truths. On the contrary, you do not have to be a Jew to favor what Jews advocate. If you want to support public education as we now know it, join NEA. If you want to advocate more money for welfare, or raising taxes for increased support for unmarried teenage mothers, or any of the other buzzwords at the NJCRAC meeting, why not find the appropriate, general-membership group to fight for your cause? After all, we Jewish conservatives have founded no counterpart to advocate life against abortion, the family against God-knows-what, to support tax reform and a balanced budget or a voucher system in education. We just find our rightful place in the mainstream of the politics we espouse. And we do not find it necessary to demonstrate out of the writings of the Torah that Ronald Reagan embodied the virtues of Moses or that the Evil Empire represented Satan—though some of us would find little difficulty in adducing probative proof-texts for both propositions, among many favored by our politics.

What is the difference? The right advocates a single law for all Americans, equality before the law; the left discriminates. The right opens the mainstream to all comers; the left defines society in terms of ethnic or racial groups. The right favors integration and equal opportunity; the left, segregation and racially proportionate outcomes. So it is quite natural for the Jews to ghettoize themselves on the left—if that is the politics they wish to adopt. Still, this is odd, for the left has consistently taken positions hostile to what is good for the Jewish community—tolerating anti-Semitic black racism in the name of "free speech," for instance—while the right has advocated what is good for this country and, therefore, also good for Jews. The left ghettoizes Jews, thus hijacking Judaism.

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Letter From Moscow

by Robert C. Whitten

Spirituality and the Russian Armed Forces

The once-mighty Russian Army is in a state of disarray. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it lost much of its substance and all of its moral bearings. So far, nothing has replaced the latter. To compound matters, the citizenry, once proud of its armed forces, tends to look on them with disdain or even hostility, especially the young. Meanwhile, Russia's woeful economic state has made the ruble almost worthless and seriously affected military pay, causing a drastic decline in living conditions. Field grade

officers up to the rank of colonel are living with their families in boxcars, while many company grade officers have been reduced to tents—*tents*, even in the Russian winter. We do not yet have reliable figures on the death toll of infants and small children under these conditions, but they must be enormous given the severe shortage of pharmaceuticals and medical facilities. The senior officers of the army are not faring so poorly. The generals' access to military resources that can be sold on the open market has enabled some of them to survive quite well. Not all of them are crooked, of course, but the temptations are great.

It is against this background that some of the army's responsible leaders speak of "the spiritual rebirth of the Russian armed forces." As the leaders put it, the armed forces have lost the old ethics (of the Communist Party) while a new ethics has yet to appear. To aid in "giving birth to the spiritual rebirth," the Russians have held several meetings in

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Moscow over the past three years that have included Westerners (mainly, but not entirely, civilians) experienced in troop morale and social welfare. By invitation as a national director of the Navy League of the United States, I attended one of these meetings, on the "Social Dimensions of Military Reform," this past May. In addition to a large American contingent, delegations from Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland were there. Much to my surprise, I learned upon arrival that I was appointed cochairman of the section on "Military and Social Work in Troops." Despite the language barrier, I was able to follow (with the aid of two young interpreters) the proceedings quite well and even to contribute in a small way.

I asked, for example, if Russia's armed services would be interested in sending a delegation to the United States to learn how the American military deals with personnel problems and how defense-related organizations like the Navy League and the Air Force Association offer support to the services. The Russians were quite interested.

In seeking the "rebirth of the armed forces," the Russians are casting about for an anchor and have shown a renewed interest in religion. They appear to have reestablished firm relations with the Orthodox Church, and military authorities are seeking ties with other faiths, although they do not know exactly how to incorporate them. The Orthodox Church wields great moral authority even among nonbelievers, in spite of its former ties to the KGB. The Russian Orthodox Church is, of course, a nationalist church, which provides it with a firm basis in Russian culture at the very outset. Unthinkable a few years ago, there is now a magazine called *Vera i Muzhestvo* (*Faith and Mankind*) and billed as a "military Christian illustrated journal." Unsurprisingly, the Orthodox Church is prominently featured, although the first quarterly issue for 1993 contained a photograph of a cardinal addressing a group. Father Gleb Yakunin, a priest of the Orthodox Church, is a former political prisoner and the 1992 recipient of the Religious Freedom Award of the Washington-based Institute of Religion and Democracy. He has been active in military reform both as an elected member of the parliament and as a cleric and has developed considerable credibility among the officer corps. On two

occasions, I have heard estimates that about one-third of the officer corps is Christian, with perhaps five to ten percent strong believers. Indeed, I have met two colonels who appear to be in the latter category.

Despite the strong interest in establishing religious ties with the Orthodox Church and various other denominations, there is no move to introduce a chaplain corps. The military leaders apparently wish to establish close contact between troops and clergy, but with the latter in civilian capacity. Under the Russian plan, the secular duties (counseling, welfare, etc.) of chaplains in Western armed forces would be taken over by a corp of welfare workers in uniform, roughly the successors of the old political officers.

Meanwhile, the Russian armed forces seem to have embarked on rebuilding their "military-industrial complex." According to the June issue of *Sea Power* (a monthly journal of the Navy League of the United States), the Russians have announced plans for the immediate resumption of naval construction. Although construction for foreign sales has been going on for some time, this is the first announcement of such major rebuilding for the Russian armed forces.

A major problem from the perspective of the armed forces is the lack of interest in the military among Russian youth. Only half the annual draft shows up at the recruiting stations. This figure, incidentally, comes from the Russian military leaders, not the Western press. A young business agent for my daughter served two years in the Russian army during "Soviet times" (as he puts it) and hates the military services, largely because of their brutal nature. I heard from a Russian colonel that many, perhaps most, of the officers in the new regime want to rid the army of such practices. I told this young man that the American Armed Forces do not work that way but was never able to convince him. This low opinion of the armed services is exacerbated by rampant corruption. Sales of army property in order to maintain something approaching their former life-styles have reached catastrophic proportions. Much of the stolen property gets into criminal hands, to either the Russian Mafia or rogue states like Iran.

In concluding, a word of caution about current missionary efforts. Most Russians appear to resent Western mis-

sionaries, who often act as if they must convert a nation of heathens. The Russian people are not irreligious. Indeed, they seem to be far more religious than most Western nations. Missionaries who enter the country with nothing more than themselves and religious literature seem generally unwelcome. More appreciated are religious folk who come to relieve human suffering and who do not "wear their religion on their sleeves."

Robert C. Whitten is a commander (United States Naval Reserve-Retired), the national director of the Navy League of the United States, and a retired research scientist with NASA.

Letter From Serbia, Part I

by Rajko Doleček

War, Medicine, and Propaganda



I attended two symposia in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in October and December 1993, and clearly Belgrade and Serbia had changed since my last stay there. The famous cafés in Belgrade were almost empty; most shops had almost nothing to offer. The people were out of money; the sanctions had practically made a concentration camp out of the FRY. Easygoing, intellectual, and cosmopolitan Belgrade had lost much of her nonchalant splendor.

Due to the sanctions and exorbitant inflation rates, incomes had dropped to unbelievably low levels in both Serbia and Montenegro, some pensions reaching the value of four to five U.S. dollars a month, or even less. A minister of the federal government told me with a sad smile that his monthly salary was less than 60 U.S. dollars. But one thing had not changed: the people's determination not to surrender to the outside pressure of lies, slander, and disinformation and to survive with dignity all the hardships imposed by diplomatic and economic sanctions. The poor (now the majority of the once-prosperous people)

and the relatively well-off, regardless of their party allegiance, both told me the same thing: "In our turbulent history, in our fight for freedom, we went through even worse times and survived with honor; the truth will finally prevail. During the war in 1914-18, more than 25 percent of our nation was exterminated by German and Austro-Hungarian *Kulturträger* (bearers of culture)—and we are still here!"

What they find most disturbing is that their former friends and allies—the French, the British, the Americans—are the ones spreading the lies, destroying their economy—and their health. An old friend of mine, a truck driver named Jovica G., put it this way: "We fought as their staunch allies during the last two big wars. The Serbs were on the list of those who suffered most, like Jews and Russians, during the last war. And those who killed us quite recently by the thousands are now the alleged protectors of justice and democracy and are making decisions about our destiny. With few exceptions, we did not change, we still have our traditional values. But a lot of people in the West have become venal. They would sell and write almost anything about us. Their media have lost any sense of integrity and honor, the professional ethic. Their traditional values that we used to esteem have disappeared completely."

I visited a few hospitals and medical institutions, and I was appalled by what I saw. In the prestigious Endocrinological Institute in Belgrade, in the famous Military Medical Academy (VMA), the most common drug for the treatment of Graves' disease of the thyroid (carbimazol) was not available. "If the patient gets the drug somewhere from somebody who just returned from abroad and pays him in Deutsch marks or in U.S. dollars, he could be treated," said the respected professor of endocrinology Dragan M. There were virtually no anesthetics (elective surgery had decreased tremendously), analgesics, tuberculostatics, anti-tumor drugs, geriatrics; there was a severe shortage of antibiotics, insulin, etc. Some psychiatric patients were being treated with shocks, as patients were 50 years ago, because psychotropic drugs were scarce. In psychiatry, the situation was tragic. There also was a severe shortage of vaccines for infants, and the food in many hospitals was often inadequate.

Spare parts for various medical instru-

ments and for sophisticated diagnostic machines were not allowed to enter the FRY, even if they had been paid for much earlier. The well-known institute for diseases of the thyroid gland and for treatment of obesity on Zlatibor was in need of many instruments—various hormonal levels could no longer be measured there, proper treatments could not be followed. There is a modern and expanded pharmaceutical industry in the FRY, which needs various raw materials for its production, but they are all prohibited to enter the country by the Sanctions Committee of the United Nations, whose bureaucracy causes incredible delays even in the shipment of drugs and food. And if the finished drugs are allowed to enter the FRY, they are much more expensive than the drugs produced domestically. In the latter case, domestic drug production could create many much-needed new jobs. To make matters worse, Yugoslav foreign assets were frozen abroad. Who could pay for a sufficient supply of the imported drugs, vaccines, medical instruments? The Serbs and Montenegrins who work or live abroad could not do so, and, as a consequence, the infant mortality rate in-

creased tremendously, tuberculosis spread, the chronically ill died much more frequently, and there were no drugs at all for the aged.

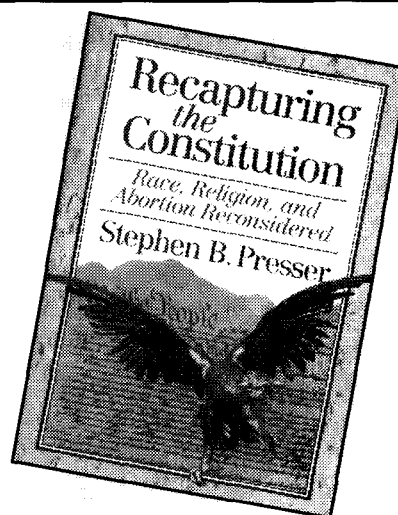
The whole situation deteriorated dramatically after Security Council Resolution 820 was passed in April 1993 and after the FRY was effectively removed from the World Health Organization (WHO) the next month. People once thought the WHO was a humanitarian and not a political organization, but the American, Austrian, Dutch, English, French, German, and Muslim representatives, together with many client governments, expelled Yugoslavia and converted the WHO into an instrument of political blackmail. Only a few voted against them or abstained, namely China, India, Russia, and Zimbabwe.

I discussed the health problems of the Bosnian Serb Republic with its foreign secretary. "In our republic," he said, "we lack about 70 percent of the medicines needed. The people suffering from chronic diseases, the elderly who are ill, are actually doomed to death. The infant mortality rate has increased tremendously. Dental care is practically nonexistent. Almost no humanitarian convoys

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reach our people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our kids are being wounded and killed by Muslim and Croat shells and snipers, too, but nobody abroad cares about them. There are no lime-lights, no helicopters, no publicity for them. We are stunned by the ignorance and often arrogance of foreign politicians and media about our history and suffering. If they speak about Sarajevo, they speak almost in unison about the Muslims. But Sarajevo, just before the tragic events in our country, was the second largest *Serbian* city, immediately after Belgrade, with only a slight Muslim majority. Do you know how Muslim grenades destroyed Grbavica, Nedjarici, Ilidža, and other Serb-held parts of Sarajevo?"

The president of Belgrade's city council is Mrs. Slobodanka Gruden, M.D. She is also the president of the Serbian Red Cross. In her official residence, the Old Royal palace, we discussed the problem of refugees in Serb-held territories. There were about 600,000 refugees in the FRY at the end of last year; there was no international help for them. Approximately half of them were expelled—"ethnically cleansed"—from Croatia; the rest were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, including about 50,000 Muslims, who

were well cared for. About 200,000 refugees were in the Bosnian Serb Republic and in the Serbian republic of Kraina. And the FRY fed them all, regardless of the draconic sanctions. The secretary general of the Serbian Red Cross, Mrs. Radmila Cvetkovic, told me proudly: "And do you know, Professor, that 96 percent of all the refugees here, in Serbia, are not in various refugee camps, but they live as guests of various families not related to them? And those families are overburdened with their own problems. Foreign media never report this, or anything about our problems with refugees."

Four British members of Parliament—two Conservatives, one Labor, and one Liberal Democrat—traveled to the FRY in a private capacity to assess the health situation in the Bosnian Serb Republic. They published a report about their findings in September 1993. They found that a health care crisis was looming and that the problems needed to be addressed quickly before conditions became critical. In addition to the lack of drugs (especially critical in Bosnia and Herzegovina), they found a rise in cases of contagious diseases and tuberculosis, infant and maternal mortality, cardiovascular disorders, and malignant diseases. They found almost no drugs for the treatment of hypertension, except for those patients who can afford to pay for them with foreign currency (assuming the drugs could be found at all). Some dialysis centers for kidney patients were closed—there were difficulties in replacing components for dialysis machines. Most needed were drugs for child care; for tuberculosis, bacteric and parasitic diseases, and for cardiovascular and malignant diseases; drugs for surgery; laboratory and diagnostic supplies; and psychopharmaceuticals. The urban population (90 percent of it) depends on drinking water supplied from central systems, but the stocks of chemicals and mechanical parts for the water purification plants were in low supply—due almost solely to the international sanctions. Waterborne epidemics increased ominously, although the previous hygienic and epidemiological situation had been excellent. The Sanctions Committee had refused many times to allow any shipment of heating oil or gas from abroad for hospitals, schools, and kindergartens. The Russian delegate battled in vain last year to convince Britain, France, and the United States to give

clearance for a large emergency shipment of heating oil for the FRY.

The British MPs found the situation especially depressing at the Belgrade University Children's Hospital. The problems were exacerbated by the shortages of medical supplies and equipment. Children whose parents could not afford to purchase medicines on the black market had to be withdrawn from long-term treatment; even cancer cases were subjected to the same criteria. Because the medication for a child with hydrocephalus (water on the brain) was not available, his brain was almost totally destroyed. The volume of surgical work, particularly heart surgery, dropped dramatically. In one case, the United States government blocked the importation of special equipment for the hospital, in spite of Security Council Sanctions Committee clearance. Children were dying of cancer and leukemia because the expensive cytostatics could not be bought. The need for children to receive proper care was totally neglected by those who organized and carried out the sanctions. The Director General of this hospital had had a monthly income of approximately 1,200 U.S. dollars—now it had dropped to 18 U.S. dollars.

The British MPs concluded that delays of up to six months in the granting of import licenses, even for humanitarian aid, had become the norm. Clearly, there was a need to reexamine the colossal bureaucracy that blocked the shipment of medical supplies to the FRY, to the Bosnian Serb Republic, and to Kraina. The provision of humanitarian support and care should not have been affected by the economic and diplomatic sanctions. Repeatedly, trucks with drugs were held at the Hungarian-Yugoslav border, even though they had all the necessary documents. Frozen Yugoslav funds overseas should have been freed to enable the FRY authorities to buy all the necessary medical supplies.

All medical aid in the Bosnian Serb Republic comes from the FRY, from its meager resources and donations from Serbs living abroad. Here, too, the situation was desperate, and again the shortages affected almost all types of drugs—cardiotonics, insulin, diuretics, tuberculostatics, antibiotics, analgesics, anesthetics, cytostatics, psychotropic drugs, oral antidiabetics, H2 blockers, all kinds of eye drops—as well as gauze, bandages, syringes, and needles. The mortality rate of patients with cancer,

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tuberculosis, heart and kidney diseases, geriatric and psychiatric problems increased about 60 percent. There was practically no antishock therapy, and the death rate immediately after injury had increased dramatically, partly because of the lack of fuel for ambulances and the bureaucratic approach of the U.N. protection force, which required at least six hours' clearance before flight. In the meantime, most patients died.

Finally, the British MPs came across two severely injured Serbian boys, Sinisa G. and Dejan Z., aged 9 and 10, who suffered critical trauma from a Bosnian Muslim shell on August 5, 1993. Sinisa suffered severe abdominal injuries, damage to the stomach and both the small and large intestines. He was burned and had sustained wounds on his hands and neck. Dejan had both his legs amputated, and gangrene had developed in his thigh. Doctors who were treating them could not complete all the necessary treatment, so they asked that the boys be flown to the West for further help. Their parents agreed. But the boys were not flown to the West, and both died. Was this reported by CNN or by the *New York Times* or *Time* magazine?

People in Belgrade cannot understand the hypocrisy of the West, particularly the Western media and politicians who speak about human rights and about the sacrosanct rights of children while condoning and encouraging sanctions that kill innocent people, especially children. The weak and the poor are punished without reason; they suffer much more than the affluent leaders. Nobody is innocent in the civil war in Yugoslavia, a civil war that the West helped to initiate and to spread, but the politicians of the West are ignorant of this region's history and are unwilling to acknowledge their errors, to admit that they were successfully manipulated. Is it not a crime if an organization like Global Public Affairs earns huge sums of money manufacturing lies and disinformation about a country that has repeatedly proven its courage and loyalty to its friends and allies in the West? The Serbs will never forget the words of the last United States Ambassador in Belgrade, Mr. Warren Zimmerman: "We will compel you to stop smiling!" Neither will they forget the arrogance and ignorance of Senator Robert Dole when he visited Kosovo.

Our week in Belgrade was ending. We were invited to dinner by our good friend Rade R., a tough Montenegrin,

and his wife Olga. Rade had just returned from work in Russia. His plum brandy was excellent, his white-labeled Vranac—the superb Montenegrin claret—soothed all the anxieties and hardships. "Look, Rajko and Dobra, what I found in an old journal: the words of the American foreign secretary Robert Lansing about our Serbian nation, in 1918, at the end of the big war. Little has changed in the last 75 years":

When the history of this war will be written, its most glorious chapter will be called: Serbia. The Serbian army with its courage made miracles, and the Serbian nation suffered incredible hardships. Such self-sacrifice and endurance cannot pass unnoticed—they must be rewarded.

Seventy-six years ago, on September

15, 1918, the Allied armies on the Thessaloniki front, led by the first Serbian army, broke through the German, Bulgarian, and Austro-Hungarian defenses, and the sweeping advance of the Serbian army liberated Montenegro and Serbia. Every year, to commemorate that event, wreaths have been laid at the tomb of the Unknown Warrior on the hilltop of Avala, near Belgrade. Until last year, when the former allies, the Americans, the British, and the French, were conspicuously absent. . . . The Sanctions Committee in New York had refused to authorize the flight of the old Thessaloniki veterans—there are a few of them still around, all over age 90—from Belgrade to Corfu.

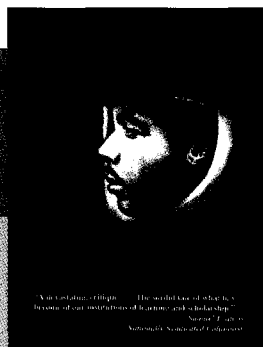
What would Robert Lansing say?

Rajko Doleček is a professor of medicine at the University of Ostrava in the Czech Republic.

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RELIGION

Religion and the Workplace

by Charles R. Helms
and Jeff S. Turner

Harassed any hirelings lately? Don't think so? Let's see. Do you refer to the office Christmas party as a "Christmas party"? Sing carols and say grace? Invite your employees to join you for church? Wear "precious feet" on your lapels and plead with subordinates not to abort? Lead morning prayers over the P.A. system? The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and federal courts want to nail your hide to the wall, and you just had a narrow escape—for now. Moreover, the just-concluded struggle between the EEOC and Congress raises the question of who really rules Washington.

At issue is whether the 1964 Civil Rights Act can be used by the EEOC against the First Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion so as to eradicate religious expression in the workplace. The snake in the grass is a seemingly innocuous document in the *Federal Register*, the publication in which the new rules annually proposed by Leviathan first appear. The EEOC published its proposed "Guidelines on Harassment Based on Race, Color, Religion, Gender, National Origin, Age, or Disability" on October 1, 1993. The guidelines set out the EEOC's standards for illegal harassment in the workplace and derive from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits an employer from discriminating against an employee in his compensation or terms of employment on account of, *inter alia*, his religion.

Although EEOC guidelines are not binding, they obviously reflect the views of the EEOC, which, incidentally, is also charged with enforcing antidiscrimi-

nation statutes. The EEOC responds to complaints alleging religious harassment by bringing lawsuits against selected employers, who must submit to its will or spend thousands of after-tax dollars defending themselves. Even without new guidelines, some 800 complaints alleging religious harassment were filed with the EEOC in 1993.

Anyone looking to the federal courts to provide a bulwark against EEOC activism will be disappointed. On instructions from the United States Supreme Court, federal court opinions give "great deference" to EEOC interpretations of Title VII, and the interpretations thereby pass into law. Thus, rules written and enforced by unelected bureaucrats are blessed by unelected judges, while Congress, having of course exempted itself from compliance with Title VII, sits on the sidelines. We lose another freedom.

The proposed guidelines reiterate that harassment on the basis of religion is a violation of Title VII. But they define "harassment" as conduct that "denigrates or shows hostility or aversion" toward an individual because of his religion and that also creates a hostile or offensive work environment, interferes with another's work performance, or "adversely affects" another's "employment opportunities." Vaguer standards could not be devised. What are a "hostile work environment" or "aversion" toward another's beliefs other than an invitation for courts to legislate? Innumerable lawsuits, and the curtailment of religious expression in the workplace by courts and nervous employers, would surely have followed.

Ironically, federal courts already interpret Title VII broadly without such guidelines. In its justly reviled decision in *Ellison v. Brady* (1991), the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals—which covers all states in the Pacific time zone plus Arizona, Idaho, and Montana—went farthest. The plaintiff, a woman, became frightened after the defendant, a fellow IRS employee, importuned her repeatedly for dates and sent her two rambling love letters. In finding for the plaintiff, the court ruled that in determining whether she was harassed with sufficient severity to prevail against her employer, it

would henceforth focus on the perspective of a "reasonable woman" similarly situated. That is, the subjective perspective of the alleged victim, rather than the more objective perspective of a reasonable person of unspecified gender, was what counted. In fact, the court admitted that its new standard classified conduct as harassment "even when harassers do not realize that their conduct creates a hostile working environment." Thanks for the clarification. The court recommended that employers "educate" and "sensitize" their employees in gender seminars to avoid future liability under Title VII.

To date, the Ninth Circuit is the only federal appellate court to adopt a "reasonable woman" standard for victimhood. Other courts opt for the more objective, "reasonable person" standard, or even require that the plaintiff prove actual psychological injury.

Guess which standard the EEOC prefers? If the EEOC had gotten its way, the subjective *Ellison* standard would, through court-blessed EEOC guidelines, have become the law of the land for religious expression in the workplace. A court decision granting two standards for the two sexes could have been used to create hundreds of standards for America's hundreds of creeds. Would a "reasonable" granola-crunching environmentalist feel "intimidated" or "harassed" by voluntary morning prayers led by his Catholic boss? Would an Evangelical who privately remonstrated an adulterous subordinate be creating a hostile work environment? Would employers have to "educate" and "sensitize" their employees to eliminate disparaging references to tree-worshipping, the goddess Gaia, Shirley MacLaine, or Dionne Warwick's psychic advisors? The litigation would not have ceased before religious expression was confined within the four walls of churches and private homes.

Like most federal rules, the guidelines were unnecessary—except perhaps for federal employees who, unlike the rest of us, cannot easily be fired for boorish behavior. The harassment targeted by the guidelines could easily be handled by state legislation (to the extent not preempted by the feds) or by private tort claims for wrongful termination or in-

tentional infliction of emotional distress. But then, why punish harassment alone when you can curtail Christianity at the same time?

Congress, prodded by over 100,000 wrathful letters and calls, eventually lifted its snout from the public trough long enough to turn a sleepy eye on the EEOC. On May 26, 1994, in House Resolution 446, some 100 members of Congress expressed their "sense" that the new definition of harassment "may result in the infringement of religious liberty." On June 7, the Senate passed a similar resolution, S. 219, criticizing the EEOC for expanding the definition of religious harassment beyond current standards. Of course, neither resolution was legally binding.

In testimony before Congress on June 6, EEOC Chairman Tony E. Gallegos, a Reagan-Bush appointee, responded that the proposed guidelines would only prohibit religious harassment, not religious expression. They would not prevent the display of a crucifix, the wearing of a yarmulke, or the placement of a Bible on a desk, he claimed. Gallegos' well-meaning naiveté would be precious were it not so dangerous. (Recall, on its 30th anniversary, the congressional debate in 1964 over the Civil Rights Act, when Senator Hubert Humphrey repeatedly assured suspicious "hicks" from the Heartland that passage of the act would never, ever lead to forced busing.)

On June 27, a dissatisfied House upped the ante when it adopted, by a vote of 366 to 37, an amendment to the EEOC appropriations bill that blocks funding to implement the guidelines. On July 21, debate shifted to the Senate, where three Clinton administration nominees to the EEOC declined to comment on whether they agreed with the proposed guidelines. The Senate, led by an obviously annoyed Howell Heflin of Alabama and Hank Brown of Colorado, reacted on July 22 by approving an amendment to delete religion from the EEOC's proposal. The irony is that, compared to the EEOC's radical estrangement from Middle American piety, the posturing of our insular and omniscient Congress seems virtuous.

In mid-September, a spokesman for the EEOC told us that the agency had no timetable for finalizing the guidelines and that the guidelines *as originally drafted* were still under consideration. However, one senator—probably a Re-

publican, we are told—then exercised his privilege of holding up confirmation for not only the three EEOC nominees, but for *all* nominees before the Labor and Human Resources Committee. Although no one officially knows why the privilege was invoked or by whom, the conclusion drawn by some senate staffers is that the unknown senator wanted to bring the EEOC to heel.

Faced with still more delay in filling three of the five slots on the EEOC Commission, the remaining commissioners finally caved in and voted unanimously to withdraw the guidelines on September 20. The way was now clear for the Clinton nominees, which means that the commission will now be controlled by persons presumed to favor the guidelines. Congressmen come and go (eventually), but the EEOC and federal court opinions are with us always. *Oremus.*

Charles R. Helms and Jeff S. Turner are attorneys in Dallas, Texas.

Affirmative Action and the Lubavitcher Rebbe

by Sanford Pinsker

As if it wasn't bad enough that the 92-year-old Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, died without an heir, or that he sorely disappointed a considerable faction of his most zealous disciples by refusing to cheat death and thus show himself as the Messiah, what followed the traditional seven days of mourning turned out to be far worse. For it seems that the painful, complicated process of choosing a successor will run into a thicket of governmental interference. The following transcript of a phone conversation between Ms. Leah Lichtenstein of the city's Fair Hiring Practices Office and a member of the Lubavitcher's inner council suggests this is only the first shot in a war of red tape and regulations that will unfold in the next few months.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Rabbi Rosenberg, this is Ms. Leah Lichtenstein calling from the mayor's office. First, let me extend my sincere condolences. Rebbe

Schneerson was indeed a remarkable individual.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Yes . . . yes, he was. We are all in great shock.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Nonetheless, the Lubavitcher Movement must forge on, and that's why I'm calling. Because, you see, the position of Lubavitcher Rebbe falls within the guidelines of the Fair Hiring Practices Office.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Fair? We have always been a fair people, even a just people. Is that what you want to know?

Ms. Lichtenstein: Not exactly. What our office needs to know is how you plan to advertise the position and what specific steps you are taking to insure the widest possible diversity in your applicant pool.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Pool? I'm afraid I don't understand. Lubavitcher Hasidim study, they pray, they do good works. They have no time for swimming.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Not that kind of swimming, not that kind of pool. No, what I mean is, are you planning to run a job description of the position in places like the *New York Times* and the *Post*, in the *Amsterdam News* and *La Raza*, in *Variety* and *Women's Wear Daily*?

Rabbi Rosenberg: Why would we want to do that?

Ms. Lichtenstein: Why, to make sure that you attract a sufficient number of minority candidates, of course. Besides, it's the law. I'll send you forms 27-A-34 and 37-80-B, which outline your responsibilities in detail. Naturally, your office will need to keep a record of each applicant's affirmative action profile—you know, how many are Hispanic, African-American, women, Native American, homosexual, and, of course, "other."

Rabbi Rosenberg: Are we required to chose somebody from one of these categories?

Ms. Lichtenstein: An interesting question. As I understand it, all the previous Lubavitcher rebbes have been Jewish men. This constitutes what we call a pattern of discrimination, and I'm afraid that the courts would not look kindly on a new hire that perpetuates old prejudices. That's why the job description is so important. For example, is there a good reason why the post couldn't go to somebody with administration experience, perhaps in a city agency or even the private sector?

Rabbi Rosenberg: I don't think so. The Lubavitcher rebbe must be a scholar, a teacher, and, most of all, a holy

man.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Well, I must tell you that the man part will be troubling. Surely, you must have meant "a holy person."

Rabbi Rosenberg: No, dear lady, I meant man. The Lubavitcher rebbe has always been a man. It wouldn't work any other way.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Why not? Have you tried it? This is, after all, 1994.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Well, for one thing, the Lubavitcher rebbe must have a beard.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Anything else?

Rabbi Rosenberg: He wears black clothing. He speaks many languages—Hebrew and Yiddish at the very minimum.



Ms. Lichtenstein: Well, the dress code business is no problem, at least the part about black suits. Saks is showing some lovely stuff in black. With the right kind of eye shadow and some discreet accessorizing, it could work. I know, because I was just there last week. But I should tell you that no judge—male or female—is going to hold still for the beard business. And I'm afraid we can't allow you to insist on one, much less two, exotic languages. How about we change these to Spanish? That way, you'll have a better chance recruiting in Dominican neighborhoods.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Impossible. A rebbe who doesn't know how to speak Yiddish is not a rebbe at all. No way.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Look, we ran into a similar problem when Hunter College advertised for a German professor and then insisted that the person know German fluently. We took the department to court, and I'm happy to say we won. There was an injunction, an appeal, but in the end they settled for a Spanish speaker. Believe me, most of their students don't know the difference.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Ms. Lichtenstein, I don't want to sound ungrateful because I know you're trying to help us during a bad time. But is there somebody else I can talk to, somebody who might better understand our circumstances?

Ms. Lichtenstein: I was about to get to that. You know, the Fair Hiring Practices Office is only one agency that wants

to talk to you people. There are others. For example, I understand that your movement has been pestering people in Times Square, asking them if they're Jewish and, if they are, if they've said their morning prayers.

Rabbi Rosenberg: Yes, indeed. That was part of the Rebbe's mitzvah campaign. We have been enjoined to continue it.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Without a proper license from the Multicultural Religious Practices Office? I think not. Do you people really think you can buy full-page ads in the *New York Times* instructing people when to light Chanukah candles and simply ignore the rituals of Kwanza, or that you can interfere with pedestrian traffic on Forty-second Street without informing people about the Muslim injunction about bowing toward Mecca? No longer, buddy. We've got statutes that cover this. We've got laws.

Rabbi Rosenberg: You talk of laws, but what about God's law? What about the Commandments?

Ms. Lichtenstein: Not covered under New York City regs, I'm afraid. Which brings me, by the way, to my last point. I've been reading articles that claim the late Lubavitcher Rebbe was the Messiah. That, too, is prohibited by affirmative action guidelines 46-83-C and 47-84-B. I'll enclose copies along with sample Equal Opportunity Employment forms. You'll have 4 to 6 weeks to comply fully, at which time you'll be sent a complimentary recording of "I Love New York's Greatest Hits." Let my office know if you prefer cassette or CD.

Rabbi Rosenberg: I don't think any of this will really be necessary, because when I tell the others what lies in store for us in this city, I think we'll be moving to Israel. Crown Heights has never been a bargain, believe me.

Ms. Lichtenstein: Well, that's your decision. But you'll have to fill out the proper paperwork with the Department of Emigration, and you should know that multiculturalism is an important consideration there as well. I realize that Jews tend to want to go to Israel, but there's no good reason why settling in other countries—say Nigeria or Nicaragua—wouldn't do just as well. But Ms. Adler can explain all this more fully. I'll have her call you.

Sanford Pinsker is Shadek Humanities Professor at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

LETTERS

James Branch Cabell

by Ralph de Toledano

In a 1956 essay, Edmund Wilson wrote: "Cabell is out of fashion." Withdrawing his dismissal of James Branch Cabell, Wilson gave him a critical accolade—and his generosity was praiseworthy. For by 1956, Cabell was not only out of fashion but virtually forgotten, though he was not alone in this. Most of his contemporaries, more or less, had faded. Sinclair Lewis, for example, was remembered more for his battles with ex-wife Dorothy Thompson and for his coinage of "Babbitt" as a term in America's lexicon than for his novels. Scott Fitzgerald, never understood by critics still trying to fathom Amory Blaine, had dissolved in a pool of alcohol and self-pity. Ernest Hemingway was still assiduously combing his chest hair and flexing his muscles, but he remained vital only because his genius could not be barbered. John Dos Passos, stylistically the weakest of the postwar generation but certainly the most pertinent and perceptive, had fallen under the onslaught of the "socially conscious" hatchet brigade and an Establishment that found greater sustenance in the potboilers of Howard Fast.

But "fashion" is an ambiguous word, and time-frames deceptive. Going back not too many years, I recall that as a preparatory school rebel I read, along with equally enlightened contemporaries, the fervent discussions of Cabell by Benjamin de Casseres and other critics in books still on library shelves. I wrote and published derivative pieces on *The Cream of the Jest* and *The High Place*, never understanding that the latter title linked it to pagan practices imbedded in the history of the race. Yet to this degree, Edmund Wilson was correct, for the literary journals of the 1950's did not fluctuate from their concern with the delicate or muscular expression of Hemingway and his imitators, at least not long enough to give a thought to Cabell's word. Oddly enough, in the 70's and 80's, I noticed that Cabell's

books would disappear far more rapidly from the shelves of my favorite *bouquinistes* than those of other writers presumably in fashion.

Considerations of Cabell are today sadly limited to Wilson's excellent essay in *The Bit between My Teeth*, the third volume of his chronicles, and to Vernon Parrington's thoughtful assessment in *Main Currents in American Thought*. For the rest, we have enthusiastic one-liners by George Bernard Shaw and other writers and H.L. Mencken's extravagant praise of one who was more discussed than read in the days of *Smart Set* and *The American Mercury*. Mencken, of course, was mainly interested in Cabell's ironic comments on the Southern scene, though the Cabellian assessment dealt in historical perspectives and not in thumbing its nose at the booboisie. Mencken was appalled by the vapidity and turgidities of the Erskine Caldwells and William Faulkners to their recapitulations of the New South—and he was also pleased to contemplate a gentleman writer interested in *writing* rather than in mental self-abuse.

Cabell was a gentleman—and I must be forgiven for using what has become a pejorative word—and a writer who, as he asserted in *These Restless Heads*, wrote principally for his own diversion. He was indulging himself, less devotionally than Balzac, in *la comédie humaine*—comedy in its Renaissance connotation. And though Cabell denied repeatedly that he was in any way a participant in the pages of his books, this was reverse modesty on his part. For of all the writers since Michel de Montaigne, James Branch Cabell was *involved* in what he set down on paper, though the involvement was almost never autobiographical. He walks through his pages unabashedly, the small smile over the epigram or the sly sexuality dominant.

Cabell was writing of a South that, having spent its treasure, its *élan*, and its cultural currency in a war it could not win, against a brash, industrial, and economically predatory north, was attempting in the 20th century to preserve its crinoline manners, its Jeffersonian pretensions, and the frayed class system it had salvaged from the War of Independence. The South was psychologically depleted and could not contend against a new breed of carpetbagger or a rising redneck lower-middle class, which had seized the political establishment. Tradition had degenerated to pose, and

symbolically the South could be likened to Toledano Street in New Orleans, named after the first Spanish governor of what would be Mr. Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, which the middle-class whites would snigger to visiting northerners as being "in the niggah redlight section."

In the Virginia where Cabell lived and wrote—to be precise, Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy—hypocrisy, which La Rochefoucauld characterized as the tribute vice pays to virtue, flourished. There was honor, trivialized to protect the reputation of women and the manhood of their spouses, and a virginity that lived in song but not in story. *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*, Cabell's most poignant title, captures the decaying South that would collapse under the twin blows of Depression and democracy. The mythical world of Poictesme, Cabell's dream kingdom of irony and nonromantic romance, does not enter into this novel of a perishing and discouraged region—and the furbelows of the period hardly matched the vigor of the Restoration ditty, "Adam caught Eve by the furbelow, and that's the oldest catch we know." That was left for Poictesme, not the Musgroves and the Charteris of this novel. Even Mispec Moor (that anagram of "compromise") does not exist outside of Richmond's city limits, whatever the South's endless compromises.

The elaborate medieval world Cabell created—as alive and articulate as the thronging streets in Rabelais—was appropriate to the time and place of its writing. His style is *sui generis*—rich, beautifully contrived, and sometimes euphuistic, but always a delight to those who contemplate the infinite facets of English. The ironies, and they are everywhere, often creep on you unawares as in the last pages of *The Cream of the Jest* when Felix Kennaston realizes that the magical sigil that has been transporting him back in time to Poictesme is but a flattened bottle cap.

In his lifetime, indeed from the time he gave up popular fiction for a long series of "comedies" and commentaries, Cabell was praised by some as Shavian and Chestertonian and berated by others as cheap and shallow in his comments on the human condition. His best known book, *Jurgen*, was banned in Boston as obscene for some quiet ribaldries and *jeux* that would have gone unnoticed in, say, Voltaire's *Candide*. His formal verse, which did not seek to challenge the po-

ets of his time, was taken as his true measure as versifier, though the real poetry was in his beautiful and cadenced prose. Encased in his Chaucerian strophes and Rabelaisian sallies was a shrewder assessment of his contemporaneity than that of novelists who, as Somerset Maugham quipped, found philosophy in calling a spade a damned shovel. He did not find it necessary to invade the bathroom or the *bagnio* to observe sex and the bodily functions, and his wit and laughter in observing them was more perceptive and certainly healthier than that "rubbing of the dirty little secret"—D.H. Lawrence's formulation—which so occupied the writers of his and later times. He poked fun at a common sense which was more senseless than common as he scratched it delicately or broadly.



The problem and the dilemma for those who once read Cabell deeply, and for those who may do so in the future as literature recycles itself, is suggested by some of his titles: the philosophical work *Beyond Life*; the altar at *The High Place* on which he lays his dreams; *The Cream of the Jest*, which is not in the sigil but in the dialectics of life; and the acres of Poictesme, in which the ape-man "strives blunderingly, from mystery to mystery . . . not understanding anything . . . honeycombed with poltroonery, and yet ready to give all, and to die fighting" for the sake of an "undemonstrable idea" that he is a symbol. Cabell responds in his dreams, and it is overwhelming and significant that the early pages of *These Restless Heads* are both an adumbration and an *explication de texte* of Prospero and Shakespeare's most engaging play, *The Tempest*.

In his concept of Woman and woman—what he calls "the essence of domnei"—Cabell starts with the concepts of courtly love (accurately limned for some of my generation in the lectures of Raymond Weaver at Columbia though never understood by writers of pseudo-

troubadour romances), skirts but does not reject the Platonic wisdom of Diotima, and presents the Helens and Ettarres and various Dames of his creation. In the end he arrives at the paradox that in reaching for the ideal of Woman, to possess is to lose. (To today's martial and sordid feminists, Cabell's delineations would be repugnant, if not unconstitutional.) In *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*—rivet and neck never fully defined—the dialectics of love and galantry confront us, the more movingly because they struggle in the exhausted Virginia soil. Is Cabell Elizabethan? Or "modern" in a manner that poets and novelists of our cultural diaspora may envy?

In his lifetime, the works of James Branch Cabell and those he signed simply Branch Cabell were published in a uniform edition. He writes in one of his books of a visit by a young author who sat before this monument to Cabell's literary industry and lectured him on the art of writing—a spectacle I witnessed in John P. Marquand's living room, the lecturer being James Jones with one book to his credit at the time. As he told the story, Cabell's smile lingered on the printed page, for though he knew his worth, he was not a vain man. If the wheel of taste spins again for him, the best of his books will reappear in thick volumes on india paper, accompanied by the rapture of critics who have never quite understood him or his manner of breathing. But from his corner of some heavenly Poictesme, he will probably and in continued modesty recall the dying thoughts of the writer he created, Rudolph Musgrove, the central character in *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*:

Once, very long ago, someone had said that the most pathetic tragedy in life was to get nothing particular out of it. . . . And Rudolph Musgrove knew he had forgotten something of vast import, but what this knowledge had pertained to he no longer knew.

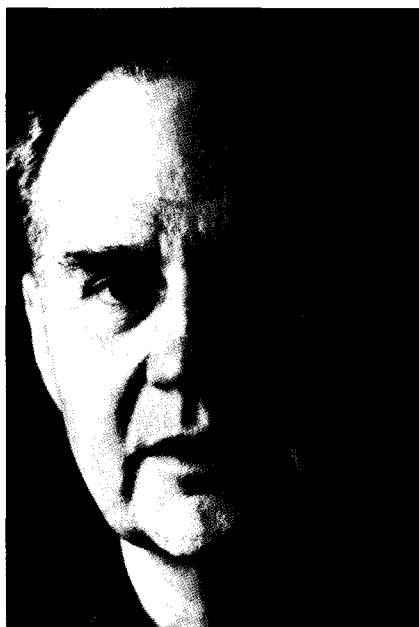
That melancholy may have pertained to James Branch Cabell's later years. But if he has forgotten what of vast import he once knew, his books have left us more than a clue.

Ralph de Toledano's latest book is *The Apocrypha of Limbo, a collection of religious poems*.

THEATER

The Work of Romulus Linney

by Katherine Dalton



Beth and John want to break the news in as civilized a manner as possible. After all, they mean to have a pleasant weekend away in their cabin. So, over beers, cheerfully, they tell John's parents that Beth is leaving him for his best friend—who is smiling in the armchair in the corner, the fifth member of the houseparty. *Shotgun*, Romulus Linney's newest play, is about divorce, and political correctness, and finally despair. What starts out as painfully forced New Age civility descends into tragedy, as Linney makes the case that if asked to be too reasonable, a man has no recourse but to turn barbaric.

Shotgun was one of the better plays produced this spring at the 18th annual Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville (which deserves credit as one of the country's best forums for new work, and which has been producing Linney's plays since 1979). But its ending is foreseeable, and the play's most sympathetic character (the husband, John) garbles his justification of his all-too-understandable anger. Still, even as a flawed play, *Shot-*

gun highlights many of the qualities that make its author such an outstanding writer.

For one, *Shotgun* addresses a real issue—divorce, and how to deal with it—in a serious way. Through his characters, Linney makes arguments that were once common sense but now are refreshing, if only because they are so seldom heard on stage or screen. As his triangle of wife, husband, and best friend shows, there is no such thing as a civilized divorce, in which a cuckolded husband and his wife and her lover can all shake hands and promptly spend a happy weekend together in the country.

John's parents, who break their own news in telling their children that after decades of separation they are getting remarried, say unequivocally that divorce was a waste and loss. And through John, who soon rebels against the I'm OK-You're OK attitude of his wife and friend with sexist jokes and a renewed interest in that other bugbear of the 90's, a rifle, Linney seems to say that man—both the sex and the species—is not just politically incorrect, but politically incorrigible. While *Shotgun* lapses into melodrama, it does not sink into cliché, which was (unfortunately) more than could be said of some of the other plays at the festival.

Playgoers would do well to remember Linney's other work. I have not had the good fortune to see many of his 35-plus plays, but I vividly remember 2, Linney's play about Hermann Göring at the Nuremberg Trials, which premiered in Louisville in 1990. In 2 (so-called because Göring was second-in-command), Linney created a character who is both terrible and fascinating. It is hard to understand how the "drug addict" peddled by Time-Life books could have run an effective political and military organization. Linney's Göring is much more believable as a leader, and all the more frightening because he is not a twisted caricature, but a man who is admirable in many ways. Linney's Göring is skillful in his manipulation of others and witty in defending himself; evil but not hypocritical (and that is something). Built around the trial and Göring's eventual suicide, the play capitalizes on the inherent drama of the circumstances. When acted as powerfully as it was in Louisville in 1990, it is a compelling play.

2 has had a curious history. After its success at ATL (earning good reviews and a National Critics Circle Award), it

was optioned for one year by Sir Peter Hall in London. But no British actor would take the role. Since Hall's option lapsed, 2 has been produced in Williamstown, Massachusetts, and at the Philadelphia Festival for New Plays, but it has certainly not received the productions it deserves, unquestionably because of its treatment of a painful subject. I sometimes wonder if it's the honesty of Linney's work that has kept him out of the big time—widely respected in the regional theaters, but not much in evidence on Broadway or in Hollywood.

2 is not Linney's first historical play. His playwriting career began with *The Sorrows of Frederick*, an idiosyncratic three-act about Frederick the Great of Prussia. "Many people begin to write, and they write the story of their life," Linney said in an interview in Louisville in March. "But I am the kind of writer—and there are many writers like me—who go to the other side of the spectrum"—to other people's lives.

One of his most successful plays is another historical piece, *Childe Byron*, about the relationship between the ghost of the poet Lord Byron and his daughter, Ada. Historical pieces are as autobiographical as any other, Linney said. In each one of his plays, "there is always a deep and very important part of me in it, or I could not write it in the first place."

Though he lived from age 13 on in Washington, D.C., was educated up north at Oberlin and Yale Drama School (where he studied to be an actor), and has made his home in New York City since the 50's, Linney still refers to himself as a "transplanted Southerner." (He is also a member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers, a fact he includes in all his biographical notes.) His parents were both North Carolinians, and he spent his early childhood in Boone, North Carolina, and then lived outside of Nashville, moving to D.C. only after his father's death in 1943.

Appalachian accents, Linney said, "were the voices I heard around me when I was an infant, and as Katherine Anne Porter points out, the most important things that happen to a writer happen before he's ten years old—and the earlier, the better." For this reason, perhaps, Linney is probably best known for his Appalachian plays—among them the widely produced *Holy Ghosts* (about snake-handling fundamentalists) and the Obie-winning *Tennessee*. Even his less well-known but excellent novel *Heathen*

Valley is set in the backwoods of prewar, 19th-century North Carolina.

As a city boy who writes about the rural South, Linney has some sympathy for Robert Schenkkan, whose play series *The Kentucky Cycle* opened and quickly closed on Broadway. In Kentucky, Schenkkan was widely criticized (by Wendell Berry, among others) for his made-up, hokey language; his two-dimensional characters; his factual errors; his slavishly p.c., black-and-white portrayal of good and evil—and for having written a play about a part of the country where he had spent exactly one week-end of his life.

Linney said *Heathen Valley* also made some rural Southerners angry when it first was published in 1962. "People feel vulnerable. People feel writers are spying on them," he said. But to his work, at least, they have come around. He has turned *Heathen Valley* into a play and had the gratification of seeing it produced at North Carolina's Appalachian State College in his former hometown of Boone.

Linney still occasionally directs his own plays (when his full teaching schedule at Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania allows). He still sometimes acts, too, and has an autobiographical eight-minute monologue called "Gold and Silver Waltz" that he likes to do. He enjoyed the acting career he had as a young man at Oberlin, Yale, and in summer stock. "Not very many people saw it," he laughed, "but I remember it with pleasure," and it gave him some practical knowledge and an actor's eye view of the stage that he feels has been invaluable to his playwriting.

At 64, Romulus Linney is still hard at work, in the midst of finishing a play entitled *Grand View* for the Capital Repertory Company in Albany, New York, with novelist William Kennedy. The characters are Kennedy's, and Linney said he and Kennedy work well together, taking each other's rewrites in stride. That play will be produced sometime during the theater's 1995-1996 season.

When asked if he has a favorite piece, Linney's answer was no. "That's sort of like asking, 'Do you have favorite parts of your life?' because the plays usually come out of something in your past that's extremely important to you, that intersects with something that happened yesterday. I don't know how to describe the peculiar way the subconscious gets jolted into action.

"I look at [my plays] as one huge, long, subtextual autobiography, which nobody can read but me." He tapped his coffee cup and added (graciously), "we'll keep it that way."

Katherine Dalton is a freelance writer in Louisville, Kentucky, and has worked as an editor at *Chronicles* and *Harper's*.

POLITICS

Democapitalism

by Thomas Molnar

"Democratic capitalism" equals political correctness for the neoconservative. It is a term at least as ubiquitous on these shores and on others as McDonald's, Coke, and Disneyland. It is the "Sesame!" that opens doors as well as markets and whose usage, planetwide, is becoming as offensive and boring as "international proletariat" and "socialist realism" used to be. None dared argue against the latter in the bad old times of Soviet power; none dare argue against democratic capitalism in the good days of the New World Order. Spies were everywhere then; agents for transnationals are everywhere now.

In a way, their efforts are silly and useless, not to say counterproductive. There is hardly anybody in today's world who would not prefer some kind of free market to the socialist paradise. But what the panting propagandists of democratic capitalism do not grasp is that if people vote for the free market, it does not at all mean that they opt for democratic capitalism. Free-marketers were the coastal navigators in ancient times, the caravan owners across the silk-route in Asia, the Syrian and Jewish merchants selling wares to feudal ladies, the marketplace providers of medieval Rhineland and Northern Italy. Buying, selling, bargaining, cussing out merchant, merchandise, and customers are lovely habits; they add spice to life, as you can see in *souks* from Malaysia to Senegal. But capitalism is something

quite different; it is an ironclad system, not only with bureaucracies reminiscent of socialism, but also with myriad agents, admen, with publicity tormenting you day and night, with bank employees calling you at all hours (preferably when you dine or nap) to sell you, in their syrupy voice, investments, higher rates, piano legs or Caribbean cruises. There is also the cultural dimension. The culture of “democratic capitalism” is nothing short of repulsive, a kind of threat and coercion: since everybody does it or wants it, why would you strive to be different? Aren’t we all one big consumer family?

If the democapitalist propagators learned some tact, it might be easier to swallow their line—but then they would not be disciplined servants of the System and would not be democrats who, when they call me, use my first name and ask the stupid question “How are you?” I ac-

cept that familiarity in the human atmosphere of the *souk*, sitting and sipping Turkish coffee—I do not accept it from that sugary but horribly impersonal voice on the other end of the line. Yes, if the democapitalist agents learned some tact, they might be better received, for example in Eastern Europe. They would also learn—but perhaps it would be an unwarranted expenditure on balance—that people over there had propaganda, including telephone calls from party officials, shoved down their throats at all hours for decades and that they hate it when democapitalists emulate these same tactics.

Everybody, but *everybody* is aware over there that the democapitalists have no higher objectives than selling and selling again on that providentially opened new market. “International proletariat” meant Moscow’s interest in keeping its armed forces on occupied territory;

“democratic capitalism” means sales techniques aimed at the same territories. This is an open secret; we in America are kept in the dark because we do not read foreign newspapers and since “true reports” from over there are appropriately sweetened by *New York Times* editing or by cameramen.

Just another type of propaganda, people say of democratic capitalism, comparing it to Communist Party techniques. Both corrupt the language with ironclad formulas, both lie, exaggerate, and use pictures, slogans, and veiled threats. Both are ubiquitous and pushy, both display the fist that empires have used since the beginning of time.

Thomas Molnar’s latest book is The Emerging Atlantic Culture (Transaction).

Seven Sins

by Paul Ramsey

Avarice

In the counting house
he counts his boasts
of counting.

Envy

Envy refuses to listen
Or compete. If it did,
It might lose.

Gluttony

Gluttony buys diet books
By the hundreds.

Lechery

Lechery’s Playmate of the Year
Is herself.

Pride

“I shall not write a poem,” insists Pride.
“I refuse to be part of such company.”

Sloth

Sloth plans to start a poem,
Perhaps soon.

Wrath

Rage declares rage,
And locks its cage.

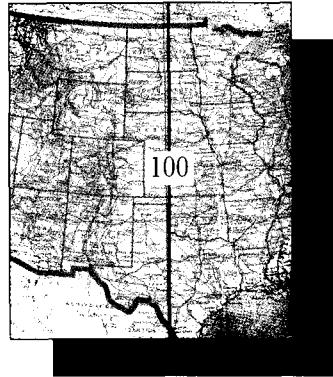
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Abbey Lives!

Fifteen years after I arrived in the West, I can no longer recall how I first became aware of Edward Abbey, though I do know that I had been the book editor of a national magazine for nearly four years before the name penetrated my consciousness. (The parochialism of the New York literati.) But I remember as if it were yesterday buying an armload of his books at the Zion Bookstore in Salt Lake City (capital of the only society on earth where a Jew is a gentile) and reading them in bed in my single-bedroom rental in the Regency Apartments in Kemmerer while blizzards raged out-of-doors and an occasional pistol discharged in one of the surrounding units, followed by drunken shouts and a confused roaring. I was working in the oil patch that winter, arriving home at odd hours of the day and night, my biological clock gone haywire, my muscles aching, my body stiff from the forty- and fifty-below zero temperatures; and though I accomplished little reading in those months, I did manage to plough through everything of Abbey's I could find in Salt Lake. Quite an effort—like managing to drink a case of beer after being lost in the desert all day. He has been dead nearly six years now, still owing me the protracted horseback trip along the Mexican border we had promised one another, but, as if by some miracle, the books have started coming again: *Confessions of a Barbarian: Selections from the Journals of Edward Abbey, 1951-1989* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), edited and with an introduction by David Petersen, this fall and, next year, a volume of his letters, also edited by Petersen, a longtime friend. And of several biographies rumored to be in the making, the first—not really a biography—has recently been published: *Epitaph for a Desert Anarchist: The Life and Legacy of Edward Abbey* (New York: Atheneum, 1994), by James Bishop, Jr.

Was Abbey really a barbarian and an anarchist? By the standard of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, who exhort us plaintively to have “faith in government,” he certainly was the latter, while what



Chesterton called “the huge and healthy sadness” of the pre-Christian era pervades *Confessions*. According to the vulgar and narrow understanding of his day, Ed Abbey was politically unclassifiable, a torpedo launched at those ungainly iron Liberty Ships of carefully welded opinion. Believing that the writer unprepared to tell the truth had better be looking around for something else to do, he did not strive for approbation or awards (“prizes,” he wrote to Irving Howe, who had just offered him an award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, “are for little boys”). And to the present Age of Sensitivity, he was anathema: tender, over-sensitized, and insecure souls could either toss the insult back, or grow a thicker skin—or suffer. In the company I mostly keep, the name Edward Abbey is either unrecognized or despised. Those of my friends (cattle ranchers, miners, oilfield roughnecks, local business people) who are familiar with the legend but have neither read nor heard of the highly disruptive speech Abbey delivered at the University of Montana in Missoula in 1985 against a background of shouts and jeers and gunfire in the parking lot, would probably be able to guess correctly the gist of his remarks. (“I’m in favor of putting the public lands livestock grazers out of business. . . . Almost anywhere and everywhere you go in the American West you find hordes of these ugly, clumsy, stupid, bawling, stinking, fly-covered, sh--smeared, disease-spreading brutes. . . . I’ve never heard of a coyote as dumb as a sheepman. . . . The cowboy is . . . a farm boy in leather britches and a comical hat. . . . Anytime you go into a small Western town, you’ll find [the ranchers] at the

nearest drugstore, sitting around all morning drinking coffee, talking about their tax breaks.”) Among my first reactions to Abbey’s work was the thought that the author insufficiently appreciated the degree to which the physical and social openness of the West depends upon the ranching “industry,” as the Western ranch is unimaginable outside the context of the wilderness surrounding it—a fact of which the present generation of ranchers needs to be reminded. Yet, of Abbey’s eight novels, one (*The Brave Cowboy*) has for its hero a farm boy in britches, while another (*Fire on the Mountain*) is the story of an elderly rancher who defies the attempts of the federal government to condemn his property for a missile range. More than he scorned Western cattle growers as “welfare parasites” and despoilers of the land, Abbey admired the best of them for their independence, their toughness, and their stubborn commitment to the preindustrial values held by citizens of the old American Republic whose passing he deplored and lamented.

An American original and individualist who resisted mass opinion all his life, Abbey in late career suffered the inexorable fate of the celebrated nonconformist by inadvertently helping to create and shape it. In some degree he had himself to blame, since he chose against dissociating or distancing himself from the environmental groupies and monkey-wrench cultists who fawned on him. But James Bishop, though inept in his role of literary critic, is sensitive to the importance of his subject as a social critic as well as a “nature writer” and environmentalist. Abbey’s true subject, he suggests (echoing an essay by Wendell Berry), was himself—a self that could not be complete in a world despoiled by a self-ravaged society. “True human freedom,” Abbey remarked a year before his death, “economic freedom, political freedom, social freedom, remain basically linked to physical freedom, sufficient space, enough land.” Unlike the majority of “environmentalists,” he believed that what is finally at stake is not the future of the earth, which will endure for eons after human beings, their worst accomplished, have driven themselves

to extinction, but that of humanity and the civilization it has created—especially in America. As Bishop points out, Abbey's interest was not in saving the world (which he regarded as unsalvageable, sordid, and barbaric) but in saving *America*, a special land inhabited by the chosen people who had created for themselves the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It was this interest, as much as the vision of the vast and multisplendored Western landscape being overrun by tens or scores of millions of Latin Americans, that prompted his notorious ("racist," "xenophobic") stand against immigration from the Third World. "How many of us, truthfully, would *prefer* to be submerged in the Latin-Caribbean version of civilization? . . . Harsh words, but somebody has to say them."

Had Henry David Thoreau's view of the Mexican-American War carried the day, Abbey's Road would have been patrolled by the *federales*. Still, Thoreau was a hero for Abbey, the man to whose work his own has most often been compared. In fact, it is much better than that, *Walden* having all the natural interest of a walk in Central Park, enlivened by transcendentalist musings in lieu of a few good muggings. Abbey deserves to be treated much more broadly as a late 20th-century representative of a long and distinguished line of American antiurban intellectuals, many of whom also opposed social, economic, and technological giantism and the centralization of the state, that includes Jefferson, Melville, Hawthorne, Poe, Josiah Royce, Lewis Mumford—and Thoreau. Abbey's prose, for all its revolutionary mystique, has many sober and even polite antecedents. A passage from Royce's *Race Questions, Provincialism and Other American Problems* (1908), expounding the Harvard philosopher's "higher provincialism," has the Abbey ring to it:

There [to the province] must we flee from the stress of the now too vast and problematic life of the nation as a whole. . . . [N]ot in the sense of a cowardly and permanent retirement, but in the sense of a search for renewed strength, for a social inspiration, for the salvation of the individual from the overwhelming forces of consolidation. Freedom. . . dwells now in the small social group, and has its securest home in the provincial

life. The nation by itself, apart from the influence of the province, is in danger of becoming an incomprehensible monster, in whose presence the individual loses his right, his self-consciousness, and his dignity.

Those over-consistent souls who remark that, as Thoreau's cabin was within walking distance of his mother's house and her washboard, so Abbey's primary residence over the years was the sprawling ultramodern city of Tucson have missed the point. For Abbey, the American West—"All of it"—was his province, defined not only in terms of wilderness but of its (ever-decreasing) remoteness from the Eastern monster that the West seemed bent on recreating between the Front Range and the Pacific Ocean. To Thoreau's statement that, "What we call wilderness is a civilization other than our own," Abbey might have added, "What I call civilization is surrounded by a civilization other than our own."

Confessions reveals a susceptibility to the conviviality of city life and even to the aesthetics of the cityscape (though characteristically Abbey preferred Hoboken, where he spent several years while married to one of his two Jewish wives, to Manhattan) but none at all to small-town or farm life which he, having been raised on a farm in western Pennsylvania, loathed. For Abbey, happiness was always one thing or the other, megalopolis or wilderness: an unexceptionable preference that nevertheless compromised his appreciation of rural culture and, especially, agriculture.

That, for several reasons, is too bad. For one thing, it left him vulnerable to the ideological excesses of the Social Democratic Wilderness Party, including its Deep Ecology faction, and therefore to plausible counterattack by the Enemy. (What right anyway have city people and suburbanites—at least 90 percent of environmentalists in America—to create policy for the management of wilderness and other rural lands, of which their knowledge is almost entirely theoretical and secondhand? The land, as Latin American revolutionaries say, belongs to those who work it. Imagine the uproar if the farmers of upstate New York insisted on writing crime control bills for New York City!) Another is that it prevented him from recognizing that the maintenance of a rural culture based on ranch-

ing is infinitely more important to the preservation of the Western United States than any number of wilderness set-asides engineered by congressional representatives from urban California and bluestocking districts on Manhattan Island. The third is that it blinkered and blinded him against a truth that seemed axiomatic to human beings throughout most of their history, and that is being rediscovered today even as it is most emphatically denied.

"The main problem of the coming century," John Lukacs says, "will be people's relationship to the land. But the pollution of land, indeed of all matter, is preceded and produced by the pollution of minds." Early in the 20th century if not before, the causal connection between man's depredation of the natural world and his own self-degradation began to be noticed. Romano Guardini concluded that culture arises from a living human relationship with nature, an argument that was developed in the United States over the next decade by the Southern Agrarians; Santayana in his last book published in 1953 wrote that an animal economy, based on the breeding and hunting of animals, is the natural condition of man: neither wilderness nor city but *rus in urbe* or *urbs ruri*, the rural center. What Lukacs calls the "insubstantialization of matter"—its remoteness from our lives in combination with the increasing "abstractness of patterns of thought"—in his opinion demands "a conscious realization, not only of the sinful nature of man, but the already overdue necessity to rethink the entire meaning of progress," an agendum that Abbey pressed for 40 years.

"Lavender cumuli floating like armadas of men-o'-war over the arid canyons, bombarding them with lightning bolts; hisses and shouts of wind; the irritable whining of flies; clear open seas of blue and green to the west and north; the charged stillness, the heat, the sudden flurry of the whirlwind; . . . danger, pressure, tension, anticipation in the air. . . ." Despite a somewhat messy and disordered life that included five marriages and in which satyriasis yielded only to ill health and premature death, there is nothing of the barbarian in the man who could create this description of afternoon storms above the summer desert of southeastern Utah. Nothing, that is, except the alien, the dissenter from a society widely considered superior to his own. 

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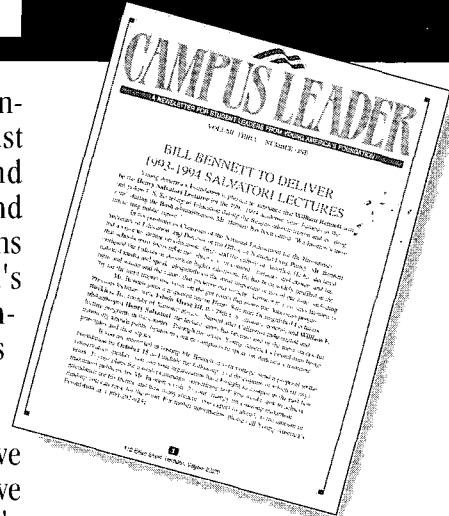
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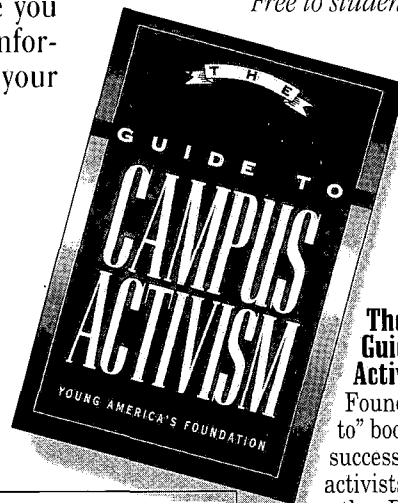
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